GA VOICE

01.07.11 | Vol. 1, Issue 22 | SPEAKING OUT

'TOO BUSY TO HATE'

Martin Luther King Jr. photo by Marvin S. Trakoski via Library of Congress. Background pattern by Alaine Brine. Photo illustration by Bo Shelton

Gay marriage photo campaign leads packed schedule of MLK Weekend events.

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What we have to worry about as the Georgia legislature returns under new governor. **Page 6**

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Does the word 'queer' help or hurt our community? **Page 12**

2011 BUCKET LIST
20 things to put on your gay agenda before this year kicks the bucket. **Page 15**

GAY SKI WEEKS
Hit the slopes at these top LGBT winter vacation getaways. **Page 19**

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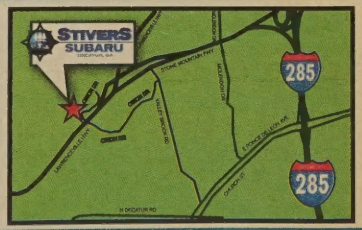

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OUTSPOKEN IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Publicity photo

"In 2011 I want to offend a new Palin. [Willow Palin] called people a [fag-got] on Facebook a couple of times. You don't throw around the f-word without hearing from me about it."

– Comedian and vocal gay rights supporter **Kathy Griffin** on her New Year's resolution, which is to offend Sarah Palin's 16-year-old daughter, Willow, who previously used anti-gay slurs on Facebook. (Hollywood Reporter, Jan. 1)

"Everyone was so worried about who was going to want to see this movie. I remember them being like, 'How do you get guys to a ballet movie? How do you get girls to a thriller?' And the answer is a lesbian scene. Everyone wants to see that."

– Actress **Natalie Portman** on the brief sex scene she shares with Mila Kunis in the film "Black Swan," in theaters now. (Entertainment Weekly, Dec. 31)

BY THE NUMBERS

100

Pictures of 'Uganda's Top Homos' published in October in the weekly newspaper Rolling Stone (not related to the US music magazine)

1,000,000

Children that the Ugandan newspaper claimed the "homos" planned to recruit by 2012

3

Plaintiffs who had the courage to sue the Ugandan newspaper over the article, which declared that people should "hang them"

400

Monetary damages, in pounds, that a high court recently ordered the newspaper to pay to the plaintiffs. It converts to about $619 US.

Source: Guardian.co.uk, Jan. 3

Photo via Facebook

"Homosexuals are sexual predators."

– Mecklenburg County Commissioner **Bill James** in an email about repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on openly gay servicemembers (WRAL.com, Jan. 3)

"It's like having a resolution saying we're going to be uber-sensitive to prostitutes and pedophiles because we don't want them to get mad."

– Mecklenburg County Commissioner Bill James, reacting to news that the commission may pass a resolution opposing bias based on sexual orientation after his previous remarks. (WRAL.com, Jan. 3)

"For many years we have talked about fulfilling one of our greatest wishes by becoming parents. And now this wish has been granted to us, we feel so blessed and lucky."

– **Sir Elton John** in a statement about the Dec. 25 birth of his son, Zachary Jackson Levon Furnish-John. John and his partner, David Furnish, became parents with the help of a surrogate. (USWeekly.com, Dec. 29)

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Strike a pose for equality

NOH8 campaign comes to Atlanta during MLK Weekend

*By **Dyana Bagby***
dbagby@thegavoice.com

The photography campaign that has spawned nearly 6,000 photos of celebrities and every day people with duct tape across their mouths and "NOH8" painted on their faces began two years ago in an L.A. apartment at about 3 a.m.

Photographer Adam Bouska and his partner, Jeff Parshley, were devastated when California voters approved Prop 8, a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, in the November 2008 election. The two men felt silenced in their home state and wanted to do something to protest Prop 8.

"It was natural we come up with a plan to use photographs … this was on everyone's mind and we were looking for ways to get involved," Bouska said in an interview from his L.A. home as he prepares for a Jan. 16 NOH8 photo shoot in Atlanta.

Several days after the vote, Bouska and Parshley, who is also a model, were snapping photos with Bouska's camera and an idea struck them.

So at 3 a.m., the couple went to a Rite Aid Pharmacy and purchased a roll of duct tape, two bottles of Crayola paint and Q-tips.

"We felt like victims of hate. We felt a majority was voting on the rights of a minority — we felt silenced," Parshley said.

Hence, the duct tape to symbolize being silenced.

And during the November 2008 photo shoot in their living room, Parshley went into the bathroom and looked into the mirror to paint on the "NOH8" slogan with the Q-tips.

Unfortunately, Parshley failed to consider one thing.

"I thought it looked great on my face and came out and Adam looked at me and said, 'That's not going to work,'" Parshley said.

Thanks to the mirror, "NOH8" was painted backwards.

But after fixing the painting and then putting on the duct tape, Bouska photographed his partner of two years and together they co-founded the NOH8 campaign.

"We left it very simple," Parshley said. "Adam and I wanted to focus on … the features being different and forcing you to look at the person's face."

The initial idea was for people to use these photos of themselves in white shirts with duct tape over their mouths and NOH8 painted on their faces for social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace.

But the photos caught on as more than just something people wanted to post as their Facebook profile picture.

"It definitely was unexpected," Bouska, who takes every photo himself, said of the popularity of the campaign. "It just happened in the heat of the moment. But I think it says a lot about our community."

Celebrities join the effort

Bouska and Parshley then started approaching "influential faces" for the campaign and were greeted warmly by celebrities wanting to participate.

"As we gained more visibility, more celebrities started coming to us," Bouska said.

And the celebrities keep coming. Bouska has photographed such stars as lesbian "Glee" star Jane Lynch; Oscar winner Marlee Matlin; "D-List" star Kathy Griffin (holding her two Emmys); Meghan McCain (daughter of Sen. John McCain, who vehemently opposed the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"); Sen. McCain's wife, Cindy McCain; DJ Tracy Young; Bravo's Andy Cohen; gay actor and funnyman Leslie Jordan; and, yes, the Real Housewives of Atlanta.

Bouska has also captured the images of Lt. Dan Choi wearing his military fatigues as well as other gay members of the military.

And while the celebrities raise awareness, it's really the ordinary people who are making changes in their communities every day who are the real focus of the campaign, Parshley said.

"A lot of people say to us, 'Why are you only photographing celebrities?' But every day people are the real foundation — 90 percent of the photos taken are every day people," he added. "It's just the celebrities are the ones being published."

The campaign's website has several albums — two albums dedicated to "familiar faces" while thousands of other photos are dedicated to every day people who want to make a statement. And, if you look closely in the albums, you can catch a couple of Georgia celebrities, including DJ Vicki Powell and Derrick Martin, the gay teen from rural Cochran, Ga., who made national headlines when he took his boyfriend to his high school prom.

"We like to hear their stories — that's what's so good about open shoots like the one we are having in Atlanta," Parshley said. "All these people have the same belief and want to speak out."

Atlanta gay pastor: NOH8 can help city heal

The NOH8 campaign comes to the W Midtown Atlanta Hotel on Jan. 16, the day before the national holiday commemorating Martin Luther King Jr.

The person responsible for bringing Bouska and Parshley to Atlanta is Rev. Josh Noblitt of Saint Mark United Methodist Church.

The victim of a hate crime last July in Piedmont Park when he was robbed at gunpoint by a group of teens who told him they should beat him up because he is gay, Noblitt has focused his energy on bringing healing to himself — and the city.

"We have been wanting to come to Atlanta for awhile and Josh reached out to us on behalf of Saint Mark," Parshley said.

Bringing the NOH8 campaign to Atlanta during Martin Luther King Weekend was a "no brainer," Parshley added.

And, if Martin Luther King Jr. was alive today, there is no doubt in Bouska and Parshley's minds that he would gladly participate in the campaign.

"This [photo shoot] is one day before Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday so going back to his home town was a no brainer for us," they state on the Facebook event page for the Atlanta visit. "We think he would be at the shoot if he were with us today."

Noblitt, the social justice minister at Saint Mark, said spearheading this effort was one way to deal with the emotional fallout from being attacked because of who he is.

Joining Noblitt to bring the campaign to Atlanta are Carlton Mackey from the Emory Center for Ethics and Nikki Noto, with V-Day, a global movement that works to end violence against women and girls.

Noblitt views the photo shoot as a way for the city to heal, and "transform hate into love as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday."

For Noblitt, justice in his case is slow going. A preliminary hearing was held in December but was delayed until mid January. The teens arrested in his assault are being charged as adults.

"I'm trying to make larger sense of what happened to me … as part of my journey to healing," he said.

*Top: **Adam Bouska** and partner **Jeff Parshley** pose in a creative 'NOH8' photo shoot. Familiar faces who have participated in the campaign include **Jensen Atwood, Amanda Bearse** of Atlanta and **Lt. Dan Choi**. (Photos by Adam Bouska)*

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

NOH8 Campaign Open Photo Shoot
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188 14th St. NE
Atlanta, GA 30361
Cost: Photos are $40 per person while any group or couple photos will require a $25 fee per person in the photo.
www.noh8campaign.com

For more MLK Weekend events, including the annual LGBT community Bayard Rustin - Audre Lorde Breakfast, see Page 22

Gay lawmaker predicts contentious year for Ga. General Assembly

HIV funding, non-discrimination bill on activists' wish list for 2011 session

By Matt Schafer

GOLD DOME WATCH GA VOICE

A new governor, new lawmakers, new party affiliations and the third year of $1 billion budget shortfalls may result in one of the most contentious General Assembly sessions Georgia has seen.

"I think if you want to think of the nasty ugliest things that you could possibly imagine, that will be this year's General Assembly," said Rep. Karla Drenner (D-Avondale Estates). "I think the fight will be about everything. Now that [Republicans] have such a big majority they can do anything so I think you will see personal fights, budget fights, fights about everything."

The annual 40-day legislative session begins Jan. 10, the same day Nathan Deal will be inaugurated as Georgia's new governor.

First elected in 2000 as Georgia's first openly gay state legislator, Drenner now finds herself as one of the senior Democrats in the state House at a time when her party holds the fewest seats its held since Reconstruction, and Republicans are only a few seats away from a super-majority in both chambers

"Think about it: If they want to make a constitutional amendment all they need is three Democrats in the House and one in the Senate," Drenner said. "If Doug McKillip flips three days after becoming Minority Leader what does it say about the rest of us?"

After the November election, a slew of Democrats switched parties, including McKillip. The lawmaker from Athens became a Republican after waging a campaign to be the leader of the House Democrats.

Rep. Mike Jacobs (R-Atlanta) switched parties in 2006 and said that a changing tally doesn't mean entire attitudes have shifted.

"It's not like the members themselves have changed," Jacobs said of the vast majority. "So we'll see how that plays out."

Some LGBT activists have feared that conservative lawmakers could use the new majority to push a gay adoption ban or similar legislation, but Jacobs, the most gay-friendly Republican in the General Assembly, said he hasn't heard of anything.

Budget concerns

After two years that saw $3 billion in cuts the General Assembly will have to slice Georgia's budget once again. Although the size of the cuts won't be known until Deal's budget becomes public during the first week of the session, several reports have predicted the cuts to be in the $1 billion range. Georgia's budget has fallen from a high of $20 billion to as low as $15 billion.

"The state has two options when the economy is the way it is: To make up a budgetary gap we can either raise taxes or cut spending, and the reality is that every day Georgians are hurting the same way the government is, and I prefer to cut spending," Jacobs said, noting that the Republican Caucus has generally cut rather than raised taxes.

Where the funding cuts could most damage the gay community is the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. The program helps low income HIV positive individuals pay for their medication, and is currently operating with a waiting list of about 800 people.

On World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, approximately 50 HIV activists and those living with HIV delivered some 1,200 postcards to Gov. Elect Deal's office at the state capitol urging him to fund the ADAP program that provides medication to those who can't get them any other way.

There is currently a $15 million shortfall in the state's ADAP program, Georgia Equality Executive Director *Jeff Graham said* at the time. Georgia is expecting $10 million federal funding next spring but only if the state also funds the program, he explained.

Now Graham said he is hopeful that ADAP can at least avoid cuts this year.

"We know that there has been no serious effort to cut up to this point, and with a new governor coming in we won't really know what his plans are until we see his budget," Graham said.

Although Deal was widely criticized for running an anti-gay campaign in the Republican gubernatorial primary against former Secretary of State Karen Handel, and garnered a score of 0 on Congressional report card; on LGBT issues put out by the Human Rights Campaign, Graham is optimistic about state support for ADAP.

"This is an issue that Nathan Deal did work on while he was in Congress," Graham said, explaining that Deal worked on the committee that oversees ADAP. "He actually was supportive in the past and we hope that he will continue to be supportive as governor."

Cautious approach

While always difficult to get lawmakers to lay their cards on the table this year has led some of Georgia's gay friendly lawmakers to keep their plans quiet. Rep. Simone Bell (D-Atlanta), the second openly gay member of the Georgia House, did not respond to requests for interviews and Drenner kept her cards close to her chest.

"I have some creative ideas for the gay community but it won't be me who introduces it if I can find someone to carry it," Drenner said, declining to comment further.

*Above: State Rep. **Karla Drenner**, one of two openly gay members of the Georgia General Assembly, predicted this year's session will be difficult as Republicans enjoy an even larger majority. (Photo courtesy Ga. House) Left: **Jeff Graham**, executive director of Georgia Equality, said the statewide LGBT political group would begin conversations during this legislatives session about the need to ban job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. (Photo by Laura Douglas-Brown)*

Drenner said her support of a bill could cause it to be seen as a gay issue and damage its chances of passing.

While Drenner and Bell were supportive of last year's effort to pass tougher anti-bullying legislation in the wake of the 2009 death of an 11-year-old DeKalb boy who committed suicide after enduring gay taunts, it was Jacobs who got the bill passed.

Jacobs passed four bills in the last term and like Drenner he's not ready to discuss his plans for the upcoming session.

"I'm in the process of figuring out what legislation I am going to carry," he said without elaboration.

Even the Anti-Defamation League, whose Georgia's branch has pushed hate crime legislation for years, isn't ready to talk about its plans for 2011.

"I'm not trying to be secretive, but because of all the changes at the capitol we're behind where we normally are," ADL Executive Director Bill Nigut said.

The ADL is looking for a Republican to carry a hate crimes bill that would include protections for transgender and gay individuals. It is also looking for sponsors for a bill to tighten cyber-bullying restrictions.

"We decided to take a year and back away from hate crimes and focus on an anti-bullying bill," Nigut said. "But this year we really need to get back to pushing for hate crimes. We're still one of five states without hate crimes."

Taking the long road

Georgia Equality is looking to play the long game when it comes to the organization's newest goal, passing a state Employment Non Discrimination Act that would include sexual orientation and gender identity.

"We really feel that now is the time we need to begin the conversation about employment discrimination that includes sexual orientation and gender expression here in Georgia. Knowing that ENDA won't move on the federal level for several years and looking at Vandy Beth (Glenn)'s lawsuit I think now is the time to start a conversation," Graham said.

Glenn was a legislative editor at the state Capitol who worked on correcting proposed legislation for two years until she was fired in 2006 after announcing her intention to transition from a male to a female on the job. With the help of Lambda Legal she filed a federal lawsuit which resulted in being awarded her job back. The state now pays Glenn a salary but has not allowed her to return to work while the case is appealed.

"I don't think we will see movement early on," Graham said. "We really look at the first year or two as the time to start the conversation."

He pointed out that the bullying bill was a 10-year effort from dozens of organizations including Georgia Equality.

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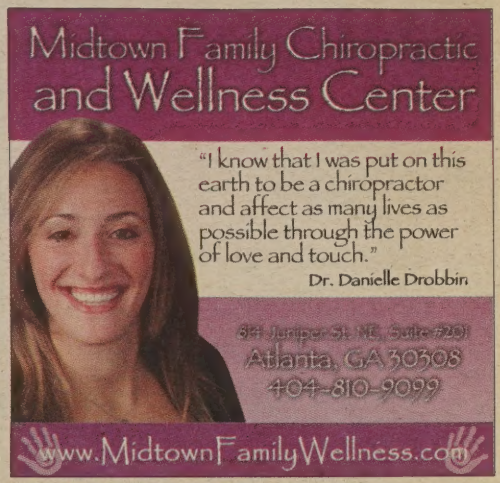
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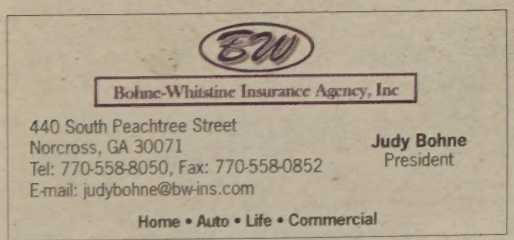

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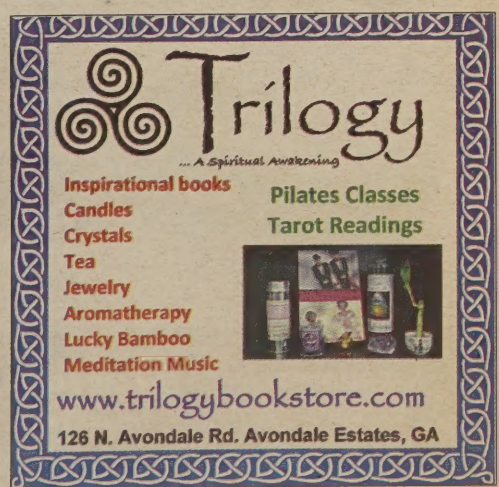

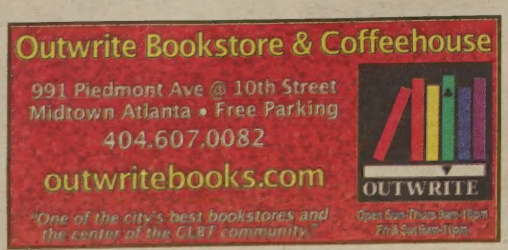
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Police have 'person of interest' in Black Gay Pride organizer's killing

Durand Robinson's daughter speaks out on father's death

*By **Dyana Bagby***
dbagby@thegavoice.com

Durand Robinson, co-owner of Traxx Atlanta, was killed Aug. 25. Atlanta police say they have a person of interest in the case. (Photo courtesy Traxx)

It was a bittersweet holiday season for Wynter Robinson, daughter of the late Durand Robinson, the co-owner of Traxx Atlanta who was killed in August.

"The holidays were difficult but I gave back to the community, a tradition my father instilled in me to go into underprivileged neighborhoods and help," she said.

Robinson, 24, said she purchased gifts for a 5-year old girl who had no other gifts.

"I bought her a lot of presents. It was something he [her father] would have done," she said.

Durand Robinson, a key organizer of Black Gay Pride, was instrumental in getting hip hop sensation Nicki Minaj to play at last year's Labor Day Weekend event. He was killed Aug. 25.

Atlanta Police officials now say they have a "person of interest" in the case. They are also seeking a witness who at one time was cooperating with law enforcement but then disappeared.

"We do have person of interest but are withholding the name at this time," said APD spokesperson Sgt. Curtis Davenport. "No other information will be released at this time. Investigators are diligently working the case."

WSB-TV reported Dec. 23 that police were seeking a witness in the case as well. Wynter Robinson confirmed this.

"We're looking for one witness who was cooperating at first but not now," she said.

The Robinson family has added $2,500 to the Crime Stoppers reward money for information leading to the arrest of Durand Robinson's killer. According to the Crime Stoppers website, the organizations awards up to $2,000 for tips leading to arrests.

Durand Robinson was shot and killed in the early morning hours of Aug. 25 in southwest Atlanta. He was found in the middle of Hadlock Street and police stated at the beginning of the investigation that Robinson may have been a victim of a carjacking. Major Keith Meadows also said shortly after the killing that it appeared Robinson knew his killer. No money was taken from Robinson's Ford truck that was only driven a couple blocks away from where the shooting took place.

"All the cash was with him and the car was only driven two blocks," Wynter Robinson said.

The police report of the killing noted people heard shouting outside before a gunshot went off.

A preliminary police report stated, "Residence at Hadlock Street SW called 911 at 0123 hours to report a person injured. Grady EMS and Fire Rescue units were already on the scene. The victim was deceased on scene by an apparent gunshot wound. Residence at Hadlock Street SW heard a commotion in the street followed by a single gunshot and the sound of a vehicle speeding off. The residence advised that when they looked out they saw the victim lying in the street and called 911."

"Allegedly my father helped this person in the past," said Wynter Robinson of the shooter. "It's horrendous to me knowing that this person was helped by my father and knew who he was.

"My father was very non-violent. If it was just a random crime, he would have given the car over immediately. The fact there was shouting means he knew [the shooter]," she said.

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

If you have a tip about Durand Robinson's killing, call Crime Stoppers at 404-577-TIPS

This seems to back up what Major Meadows said about the investigation in September.

"There were other circumstances that led up to the ultimate shooting," Meadows said then.

"This had nothing had to do with his sexual orientation. It might have had something to do with past relationships with people. Personal relationships," he said.

The Atlanta Police Department LGBT Advisory Board is expected to receive an update on the investigation into Robinson's death at its next meeting, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. at Atlanta City Hall.

Wynter Robinson said the pain of her father's death continues to reverberate throughout the community.

"He instilled great things in me. I'm sorry for everyone else," she said.

"I always thought he'd die of a heart attack because he worked so hard. It's unreal to me. It's like shooting an angel — how can you kill Durand? He was shot in the heart. And that's what he was known for — his heart."

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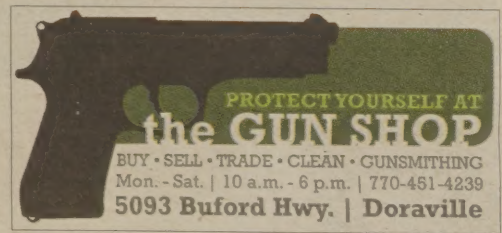
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Atlanta City Council apologizes to Eagle lawsuit plantiffs

The Atlanta City Council voted this week to officially apologize to the plaintiffs of the Atlanta Eagle federal lawsuit that was settled by the city for $1.025 million last month.

During the Jan. 3 meeting, the council voted 14-0 to apologize to the plaintiffs for the illegal raid on the gay bar, during which police searched and ran background checks on all patrons. Mayor Kasim Reed also issued an apology to the plaintiffs last month.

The apology, proposed by Councilmember Michael Julian Bond, reads, in part, "Whereas, the City of Atlanta is a mosaic of ethnicities, races, religions and sexual orientations … and Whereas, it is imperative that all members of Atlanta's varied communities — be they African American, Hispanic, Asian, LGBT, youth or senior citizens — feel their freedoms are respected, now therefore, the City Council of the City of Atlanta hereby resolves and offers an apology to the plaintiffs named in the civil action styled Calhoun, et. al. v. Pennington, et. al."

Bond, who had offered to apologize to all people impacted by the raid last year, said this week he wanted to follow through with an apology to the plaintiffs because of the "egregious nature of the raid."

After it was proposed by Councilmember ***Michael Julian Bond****, the Atlanta City Council officially apologized to the Eagle plaintiffs this week for the September 2009 raid on the gay bar. (Courtesy photo)*

"So many rights were violated," Bond said this week.

"Atlanta is the 'city too busy to hate' and the cradle of the Civil Rights movement. We cannot tolerate that type of abuse," he said.

Chris Lopez, a former bartender at the Atlanta Eagle who was arrested the night of the raid, was not a plaintiff in the lawsuit. He has filed his own individual claim against the city seeking $250,000 for "false arrest, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution."

Bond said council members kept the apology resolution to only the plaintiffs because of claims like Lopez and others that may occur from those at the bar that night — apologizing to everyone, he said, could put the city at further financial risk.

"There were issues of concern that other plaintiffs may file, but those concerns were addressed and everyone [on the council] was on board and all felt this needed to be done," Bond said.

And with Lopez' complaint still to be resolved, Bond predicted that one day, "We'll probably issue another apology to him."

— Dyana Bagby

National LGBT activist group forms chapter in Georgia

Paul Schappaugh

Paul Schappaugh, an Atlanta LGBT activist, has taken the helm of the newly formed GetEQUAL GA chapter. His first day as state coordinator was Jan. 1.

"We have our work cut out for us here in Georgia," Schappaugh said.

"We have a thriving diverse LGBTQ community here in Atlanta and my mission and that of GetEQual is to empower the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community and our allies to take bold action to demand full legal and social equality, and to hold accountable those who stand in the way — and not just here in Atlanta but throughout the state and the South," he added.

GetEQUAL was formed nationally last year and made headlines for several direct actions against President Obama urging him to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." In November, 13 activists and LGBT military veterans — including Lt. Dan Choi — were arrested after they handcuffed themselves to the White House fence to call attention to DADT.

Schappaugh is also a member of the Atlanta Queer Justice League that is currently coordinating a "queerlicious" event on Jan. 10, for which details had not been released publicly at press time. Other groups working on the event are Savannah's Queer Power movement and MondoHomo.

— Dyana Bagby

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Battle over gay marriage in Calif. heads back to state court

Federal appeals panel wants ruling on who can fight for Prop 8

By ***Lisa Keen***

A 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel surprised many Proposition 8 observers Jan. 4 when it suddenly issued five documents relating to the case.

But there was no decision in Perry v. Schwarzenegger, the landmark case testing whether voters in California violated the U.S. Constitution when they amended the state constitution to ban marriage licenses for same-sex couples.

The bottom line of the documents was that the three-judge panel that heard arguments in an appeal of the case punted a critical question regarding legal standing to the California Supreme Court.

The panel said it would not rule on the constitutionality of Proposition 8 until it gets a ruling from the California Supreme Court as to whether Yes on 8 proponents have an "authoritative" entitlement to represent the voters who passed the initiative in the appeal in federal court.

The announcement frustrated and disappointed many.

"It is frustrating that this will slow the case down, especially since there is nothing in California law that gives initiative proponents the power to force an appeal when the official representatives of the state have determined that doing so is not in the best interests of the state," said Shannon Minter of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

The development struck some as odd. It appears the federal court is asking a state court whether Yes on 8 has standing to appeal a lower federal court ruling that struck down Proposition 8.

"I don't think it was necessary to ask the California Supreme Court to rule on that issue," said Minter, "and I am disappointed the Ninth Circuit did so."

But Ted Olson, a lead attorney on the team challenging Proposition 8, said it's not uncommon.

And it was not really a surprise to learn the panel is struggling with the question of standing. During oral argument on Dec. 6, all three judges seemed troubled by the idea that a state governor or attorney general could, in essence, acquire an ability to veto a measure passed by voters by simply refusing to defend a challenge to its constitutionality in court. The California constitution does not provide the governor or attorney general a right to veto voter-passed initiatives.

Both Judge Stephen Reinhardt, widely perceived to be the most liberal of the panel, and Judge Randy Smith, the most conservative, seemed concerned that the governor and attorney general's refusal to appeal the district court decision "does not seem to be consistent" with the state's initiative system.

As governor of California, ***Arnold Schwarzenegger****, a Republican, refused to defend the Proposition 8 ban on gay marriage. Now a federal appeals panel has ordered the California Supreme Court to determine if a group called 'Yes on 8' can defend Prop 8 instead. (Photo via Facebook)*

Judge Michael Hawkins expressed frustration during argument that the panel might be prevented from rendering a decision about the constitutionality of Proposition 8 "so it's clear, in California, who has the right to marry and who doesn't." The panel seemed prepared, on Dec. 6, to ask the California Supreme Court to weigh in on the issue and it is a curiosity that it waited one month before actually doing so.

Who can appeal?

In its 21-page order Jan. 4 to the California Supreme Court, the three-judge panel asked the state court to determine whether Yes on 8 proponents have "rights under California law … to defend the constitutionality of [Proposition 8] ... when the state officers charged with the laws' enforcement …refuse to provide such a defense."

Olson, in a telephone conference call with reporters soon after the court released its order, said that, if the California Supreme Court determines that there is no authority under state law for Yes on 8 to have standing to represent voters in the appeal, the 9th Circuit would be bound to accept that determination. However, the ruling on standing could still be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, he said.

If the California Supreme Court determines Yes on 8 does not have standing and the 9th Circuit rules accordingly, then the decision of U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker on Aug. 4 will become the law throughout California, making it possible for same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses.

Judge Walker ruled that Proposition 8 violates the U.S. Constitutional guarantees to equal protection and due process. Although neither the attorney general nor the governor provided any defense for the initiative during the trial last January, Walker did allow Yes on 8 proponents to intervene in the trial as defenders of the measure. But the appeals panel indicated that standing in the district court does not necessarily mean Yes on 8 has standing to appeal.

If Yes on 8 does appeal a loss on the issue of standing to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the high court rules in its favor, it would then most likely send the case back to the 9th Circuit for a ruling on constitutionality.

'Delay but not deny' the end of Prop 8?

Meanwhile, among its other documents Jan. 4, the 9th Circuit panel issued a 16-page opinion that Imperial County, Calif., does not have standing to appeal the district court decision itself. The panel said it was denying the county's claim for standing on different grounds than did Judge Walker. The panel held that, because the county simply administers the state's marriage law, it does not have any "interest on its own" to defend. The county has 14 days in which to appeal the panel's ruling on standing.

The order said that having standing to defend Proposition 8 in federal district court does not necessarily guarantee that Yes on 8 proponents have standing in federal court.

"This court is obligated to ensure that it has jurisdiction over this appeal before proceeding to the important constitutional questions it presents," said the order, "and we must dismiss the appeal if we lack jurisdiction."

The panel further noted, "In the absence of controlling authority from the highest court of California on these important questions of an initiative proponent's rights and interests in the particular circumstances before us, we believe we are compelled to seek such an authoritative statement of California law."

The new development will, of course, delay the 9th Circuit panel's decision on the merits of the case — whether voters can withhold marriage licenses from gay couples while granting them to straight couples.

"Further delay in restoring the freedom to marry in California is a lamentable hardship on couples," said Evan Wolfson, head of the national group Freedom to Marry. "But I am confident that we will regain the freedom to marry in California soon."

NCLR's Minter agreed.

"I am confident the California Supreme Court will hold that California law does not give initiative proponents any special power to override the decisions of the state's elected representatives," said Minter. "In the meantime, however, Proposition 8 remains on the books, and every day that goes by, LGBT people in California are denied the freedom to protect their families and express their love and commitment through marriage.

"This will delay," he said, "but not deny, the day that Proposition 8 is gone for good."

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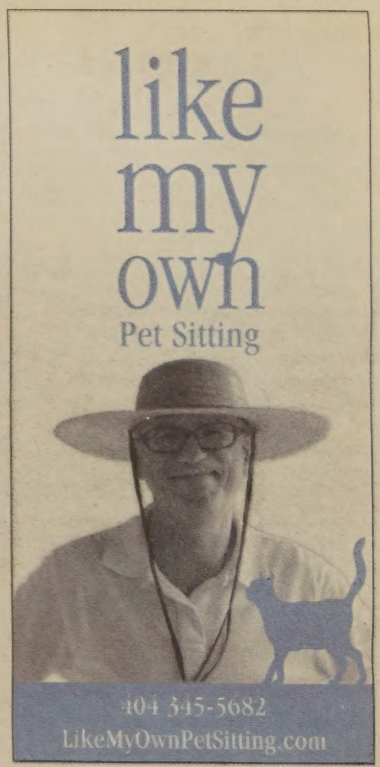

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VOICES OPINION & REACTION

Rethinking 'queer'

We were wrong to name Atlanta Eagle attorney Dan Grossman as our 2010 'Queer of the Year.' Here's why.

Editorial By Laura Douglas-Brown

What happened to our Queer of the Year?

In our Dec. 24 issue, in print and online, the GA Voice named our inaugural "Queer of the Year" — an annual honor that will go to the LGBT person, or ally, we think has had the most significant effect on LGBT rights in Georgia in the last 12 months.

For 2010, the honor went to attorney Dan Grossman for his diligence in fighting for the civil rights of the Atlanta Eagle patrons who were victims of the illegal 2009 police raid on the gay leather bar. Last month, the city agreed to a $1.025 million settlement in the federal civil rights lawsuit Grossman spearheaded.

We have now changed the award to "GA Voice Person of the Year." So why was it originally "Queer of the Year," and why did we change it?

"Queer" has long been a contested term in our community, and it isn't one we use lightly. The reasons we chose it for our annual honor were both practical and philosophical:

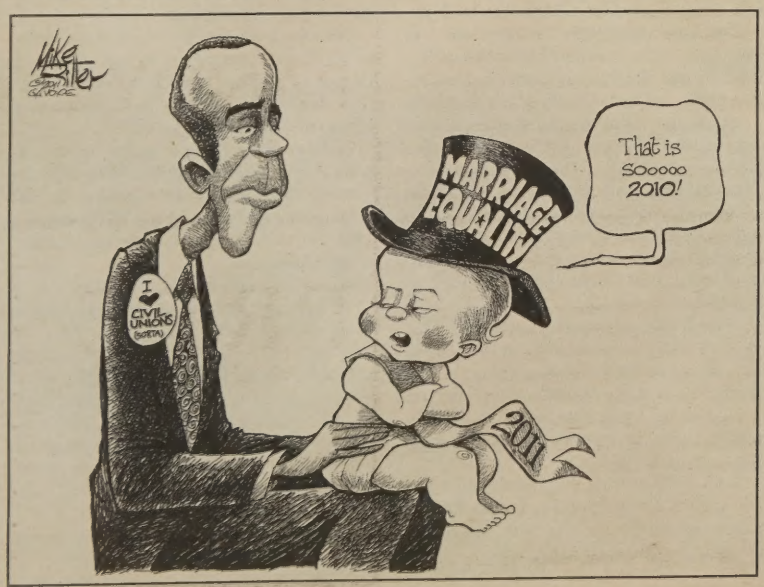
• We have no good umbrella term for our community, and "queer" is often as close as it gets.

• As writers and editors, we liked that "Queer of the Year" is short, snappy, and rhymes.

• While the word "queer" has previously been used as a slur against LGBT people, there is a strong argument to be made for reclaiming a term once used against us. Also, unlike the "n-word" — which stands out undeniably as the ultimate racial slur — "queer" is by no means the only, or perhaps even the most common, term used against us. So many of us have been taunted as gays, fags, dykes, trannies, lesbos, homos, etc., that if a word is off limits because it is used as a slur, we would have few left to describe ourselves.

• Thanks to groups like Queer Nation in the 1990s and even the local Queer Justice League now, "queer" has come to connote not only gay or transgender, but gay or transgender (or even someone who eschews those categories) with a specifically activist slant — and that spirit of activism is what we are honoring with this award.

• If something is "queer," it is also perceived as "other" or outside of the normal range, and we found the term particularly fitting with the Eagle raid. While some patrons of the Eagle also may not embrace the term "queer," the fact is that the leather community is also often perceived as "other" within the LGBT community — a factor, we think, that contributed to some members of our community being slow to rally around the victims of the police raid.



So why, given all of these arguments, did we change the title of our award from "Queer of the Year" to "Person of the Year"?

Quite simply, because we sat down with Dan Grossman and discussed at length why he does not use the word "queer" to describe himself.

Here is how Grossman explains it, in his own words:

"The word queer comes with significant political baggage and implies, to many, a sense of separateness. My own vision of the path to LGBT equality is not through separateness but inclusion; I think we should work toward a world in which straight people see their LGBT neighbors as being so much like themselves that it would be unfathomable to treat them differently."

Whether I, or you, agree with Grossman about the meaning of "queer" doesn't matter.

We changed the title of the award to "Person of the Year" because by naming Grossman as "Queer of the Year," and looking for a succinct, snappy headline, we inadvertently broke one of our most important style rules: We identify members of our community with the terms they prefer to be called.

The most obvious example of this is with transgender people. We don't ask where transgender people are in their journey — have they changed their legal sex? Have they taken hormones or other physical steps toward transition? We use the pronouns that the individual prefers.

Likewise with sexual orientation, and the word "queer."

We sometimes use the word "queer" in our lighter Arts & Entertainment section, which we think befits the growing, casual acceptance of the word in our community.

You can see that acceptance television shows like "Queer as Folk," in events like the Atlanta Queer Literary Festival and blogs like the national Queerty.com and our local ProjectQAtlanta.com — all make explicit or implied use of "queer" to reference our entire community.

Still, the GA Voice does not typically use the word "queer" to describe individuals unless they use it themselves. This is particularly true in our news coverage, where our profile on "Queer of the Year" was published.

So from here on out, we invite you to join us in congratulating Dan Grossman as our inaugural "GA Voice Person of the Year," and thanking him for his landmark work on behalf of the victims of the Eagle raid.

SPEAKING OUT

Are you 'queer'?

Readers debate whether 'queer' helps or hurts our community

Re: "Why our 'Queer of the Year' is now our 'Person of the Year'" (www.thegavoice.com, Dec. 28, and discussion at www.facebook.com/thegavoice)

I think I'd rather be called queer than gay. I'm not really sure why; I've just always liked the word better.

The definition states strange, unusual, etc. There is nothing strange about me. There is nothing strange about us as a group.

I embrace being queer.

I don't refer to myself as queer. To me, that word means something that is weird or odd.

I embrace "queer" all the time because by using it we take the power of it back. I never get the memos when a new letter is added to LGBTQQS and I love all my people and wouldn't want to leave anyone out.

I believe the word "gay" is far less offensive and much more of a blanket term than "queer" could ever be. … The concept of embracing "queer" is not something gays do in the real world, it's more an academic thing. For example, a simple working class woman knows she wants to be treated equally, she doesn't care if she's post-modern, liberal or Marxist feminist. All she knows is that she wants to be treated like a human being and not a "dumb broad." Likewise, the kid about to kill himself in Alabama doesn't want to engage in auto-alienation by embracing "queer" identity politics; he's usually a gay kid who tries to convince others that he's not some stereotype and that he's a person. The "queer" identity is a wholesale embrace of "weirdness" and "freakishness" which is very contrived, much akin to all the emo and goth kids who want to be so unique they all dress like each other.

I find the "Q" word to be quite offensive.

I have no problem with being queer. It kind of describes me perfectly even if a gay sexual orientation weren't part of its implications. I am eccentric and peculiar. As for assimilation, I do that very well too. I support gay marriage and gays in the military. In 30 years of working in my chosen field I have known exactly one other openly gay person to do what I do for a living. (It doesn't mean no one does, they just aren't as visible as I am.) Labels are tricky. As we can see from the other posts, there is no one label that everyone agrees on. I have long embraced queer, but then I only have to label myself.

I identify actively as queer, as do most of my friends. My community calls itself the "queer community" not the "gay community." I understand the historical implications of it, but it is the term that best fits me, and thus I use it freely. I understand people who don't want to be called queer, but that shouldn't stop me from identifying as queer.

I like "Queer of the Year." It rhymes.

I sort of like "human beings" myself.

GA VOICE 12.24.10

Queer of the Year: Dan Grossman

The man behind the Atlanta Eagle lawsuit made biggest impact on local LGBT rights in 2010

Editor's note: About our Queer of the Year

In our Dec. 24, 2010, print edition, we declared Dan Grossman, the attorney in the Atlanta Eagle gay bar lawsuit, as our inaugural 'Queer of the Year.' We later changed the title of the award to 'Person of the Year.'

Editor's note: These comments on Georgia Voice articles were submitted via our website and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thegavoice). Want to weigh in? Follow us there or submit comments on our website.

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YOUR GAY BUCKET LIST

by Laura Douglas-Brown & Dyana Bagby

SURE, YOU HAVE YOUR NEW YEAR'S resolutions — plans to get in shape, quit smoking, or make other self-improvements in 2011. But a new year is also a great time to appreciate all that you already have, and for LGBT Georgians, the list includes a thriving community in Atlanta and beyond.

So over the next 12 months, take some time to enjoy and feel empowered by all of the wonderful LGBT and LGBT-inclusive events, activities and organizations that we often take for granted. Here is our bucket list of activities bound to make you feel good — and even do good — in 2011.

Attend at least one Pride celebration in addition to Atlanta Pride.

Atlanta Pride is the granddaddy of all Pride celebrations in the region, and one of the biggest in the country. But to appreciate it more, and get back to your roots, check out at least one of Georgia's other Pride celebrations in 2011 — they range from small picnics to full-scale, day-long festivals, and they are bound to make you feel grateful and inspired.

Last year, regional Prides in Georgia included Augusta, Savannah, Marietta, Chattahoochee Valley (Columbus), South Georgia (Valdosta) and even East Side Pride (Clarkston).

Go to gay church. Or synagogue. Or other worship services.

If religion was ever important to you, and if you don't attend services now or you are part of a congregation that doesn't accept your sexual orientation or gender identity, go at least once to one of Atlanta's many LGBT-led houses of worship — you might be surprised how moved you will be to feel accepted where you once only felt judged. Whether you prefer contemporary, traditional, charismatic, or other styles of worship, our city has a gay congregation for you. To find a congregation, visit www.thegavoice.com and choose "Organizations" under the Community menu, then click "Religious Organizations."

Shop local: Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse, Charis Books & More, and Brushstrokes.

It's quick and easy to download your media purchases from Amazon.com, Netflix.com, iTunes.com and the like. But our local bookstores give back to our community in ways that these mega-websites don't, and if they don't have what you want in stock, you can order through their websites and at their stores. Order a DVD, CD and book from each of the local outlets listed above. Your karma will love you for it.

Protest. Just once. For anything that sparks your interest.

Last year offered plenty of opportunities to take to the streets in support of LGBT rights, from rallies in Atlanta against Fred "God Hates Fags" Phelps and the National Organization for Marriage, to rallies against the KKK in Augusta and protesting a gay beating in Savannah. And no matter how many people show up, you are bound to feel empowered by literally standing up for your own rights. So watch out for planned events, and at least once, grab your picket sign — or just your camera — and join in.

Party at gay bar where you have never been.

Atlanta's LGBT nightlife scene is a blessing and a curse, offering a niche for everyone but making it too easy to never party with a diverse crowd different from yourself. So for one night, break your usual plans — go to a bar you've never visited, and be surprised at how much fun you have. With dozens of bars in Atlanta, there is surely one you have missed, and if not, hit the road to Augusta, Savannah or Macon to see what those cities have to offer.

Please see BUCKET LIST on Page 16

Plan your LGBT bucket list for 2011

BUCKET LIST, continued from Page 15

Help an LGBT youth.

Being young and queer in the 21st Century is not easy despite the acceptance we continue to receive by mainstream society. Visit YouthPride or CHRIS Kids and ask how you can help, and become a mentor to a young LGBT person to help them deal with bullying. Be a friend and let them know things will not always be rosy, but they do get better especially if they have a support system.

Kiss on the street at 10th & Piedmont.

It's perhaps the gayest street corner in the state, and where better to enjoy a bit of fun and empowering PDA? So pucker up and celebrate one of the few areas in Georgia where we are in the majority.

Be a tourist.

Those of us who live here year-round often forget how many fun things there are to do in Atlanta, and how gay-inclusive they are. So go to the Georgia Aquarium, the High Museum, Zoo Atlanta, World of Coke, Stone Mountain, a Braves game — chances are you will see plenty of other gay folks there, too.

Get tested for HIV.

Whether you take advantage of fast, free testing through LGBT programs at agencies like Positive Impact, AID Atlanta, YouthPride or AID Gwinnett, or you simply test at your own doctor's office, be sure you know your HIV status as 2011 gets underway. Those who know their status are more likely to get treatment, and much less likely to pass on HIV. So do it for yourself, and for your community.

Attend Black Gay Pride

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride over Labor Day Weekend is one of the largest in the nation and despite the arguments against having "two" Prides in the city, Black Gay Pride offers valuable information during the long weekend, as well as some of the hottest hip hop artists at some of the hottest and best-attended club events you'll find through out the year.

*Left: The biggest Black Gay Pride events can draw crowds in the thousands, and the performers, like **Nicki Minaj** who performed in 2010, are not to be missed. Right: Savannah Pride is one of several celebrations offered outside Atlanta. (Photos by Dyana Bagby)*

Read "And the Band Played On" by Randy Shilts.

And no cheating by watching the HBO movie. This book is an epic story of the rise of HIV that eradicated too many lives. But the book also encapsulates so much of our community's history and it's crucial to know our history, especially as young people rise into leadership positions.

Invite a Facebook friend you regularly correspond with but have never met to lunch or out to coffee.

Many of us have social networking friends that we've never met, but we enjoy their witty and funny posts or their philosophical musings. Meet them in real life and strike up a non-virtual relationship.

Unplug for a weekend, or at least a day.

No Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Manhunt, Grindr, etc. It may be hard, but what did we ever do before we could comment on people's witty and/or boring status updates or their vacation photos, cruise for a hookup with our iPhone or re-Tweet Stephen Colbert's personal thoughts? Oh, yeah. We talked to each other and lived in the "real" world.

Visit a new restaurant each month.

As your budget allows, be sure to support local gay-owned eateries such as Radial Cafe, Ria's Bluebird and Sauced as well as gay-supportive restaurants including Einstein's, Joe's on Juniper, Gilbert's Mediterranean Café, The Flying Biscuit and dozens of others.

Join a gay sports league.

You know that New Year's resolution to get in shape? Take advantage of the numerous gay sports leagues — whether you enjoy swimming, bowling, softball, tennis, flag football, rugby, soccer, running, and basketball — there's something for you to fulfill that resolution as well as meet new friends.

Visit at least one community theater to watch a show.

Actor's Express, Dad's Garage, OnStage Atlanta, Center for Puppetry Arts, Georgia Ensemble Theatre (where gay playwright and GA Voice columnist Topher Payne's show "Tokens of Affection" continues through Jan. 23), Horizon Theatre, 7 Stages in Atlanta plus many more in other cities offer residents a chance to escape through live theater and support local venues that provide a variety of culture to Atlanta and the state.

Read newspapers.

Yes, we are partial to this one and want you to pick up a copy of the GA Voice every two weeks when we publish the print edition, as well as keep up with us online. But also pick up copies of the AJC (even though they may not take a shine to reporting important LGBT events in the city) as well as Creative Loafing and Atlanta INtown. It's a fact when you read a newspaper you are more likely to read an entire story rather than scan the headlines. And studies show people who read newspapers are much smarter and sexier as well.

Take MARTA to an event other than Atlanta Pride.

The trains are packed with LGBT people during Atlanta Pride as they flock to Piedmont Park and to the Civic Center for the parade. But that's not the only time we can take advantage of the city's public transportation. Sure, you hear complaints about MARTA all the time. But you definitely see a side — and views — of the city that aren't to be missed at least once.

Call or write your state and federal lawmakers.

You contact your friends and family all the time, so take 15 minutes to reach out to one of your elected representatives to let them know about LGBT or other issues that are important to you. Telling them that you support legislation to make it illegal to fire someone for being gay or transgender — and telling them how that affects you personally — would be a great start. If you live in a conservative district for the state legislature or Congress, you may not change your lawmaker's vote, but you will at least let them know that gay and trans people are everywhere in our state.

Give three hours.

Georgia's LGBT and AIDS organizations need your help, and the more time you have to give, the better. This year, commit to give at least three hours — less time than you might spend going out on Saturday night — to the cause of your choice. You could work a volunteer shift at Pride, the Human Rights Campaign Dinner, or AIDS Walk Atlanta. Or if you don't want to volunteer during a big event, there are dozens of organizations that could use your help with everything from phone-banking to stuffing envelopes.

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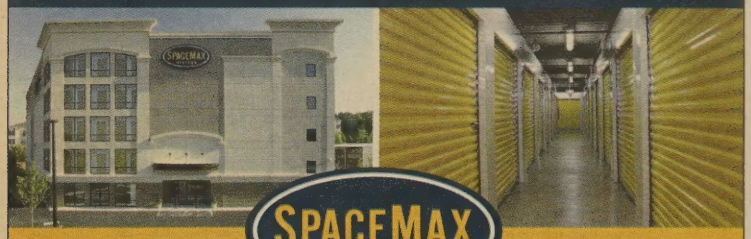

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THEATER by Jim Farmer

'Parent Trap' for grown-ups

Local gay playwright Topher Payne explores long-term commitment

Openly gay writer Topher Payne is used to penning new plays, but with his current "Tokens of Affection," he adds a new hat — that of director. His world premiere comedy opens at Georgia Ensemble Theatre this week.

Payne calls it "The Parent Trap" for grown-ups. "Tokens of Affection" is the story of siblings Charlie and Claire (Matt Myers and Kelly Criss), whose parents split after 37 years of marriage. Not happy with the idea of having two single parents in their 60s, the siblings scheme to get them back together.

Payne says he had a couple of inspirations for "Tokens of Affection." The main one was marrying his husband in 2008.

"It really got me to thinking about what that commitment looks like two or three decades later," he says. "(It) led to many great conversations with people who have partnerships I admire, including my own parents. The play is a vehicle for a lot of those stories, and my own experiences in sharing a life with another person."

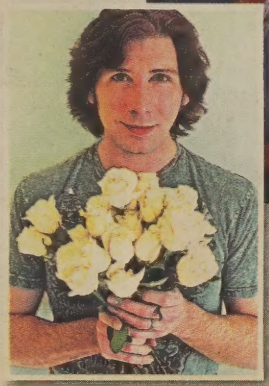
Payne describes another of his inspirations as "those breezy 1960s New York romantic comedies — 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,' 'Barefoot in the Park,' 'Sunday in New York' — set in a best-case scenario version of the city where everyone dresses well and has a fabulous apartment."

"They're about people with intelligence and wit, who actually seem like adults you'd want to be friends with," he says. "I wondered what the 2011 version would look like."

Directing this production has added an extra level of responsibility for the always-busy playwright.

"I've directed staged readings and small productions of my work, but nothing on this scale," Payne says. "When the production manager sent out the contact sheet with 30 names on it, I realized I was gonna need my big-boy pants for this one.

"My greatest joy has been the level of involvement with the design team. I've never had this much input or control in one of my own works," Payne says. "But as I've said all along, I wrote it, I cast it, I directed. If the show doesn't work, I got nobody to blame but me."



He is especially excited to be working with a new theatre. He submitted the script to Georgia Ensemble Theatre and didn't hear back for a while.

"That's not surprising when you consider (they) hadn't done an original work in 15 years, and they'd just gotten a script from a guy best known for impersonating Dixie Carter and writing columns about gay bars," Payne says.

It all worked out, however. It helped that he has a good relationship with actress Judy Leavell, who has worked with GET a number of times. He sent her the script, she liked it and lobbied on his behalf.

"It was an act of kindness that paid off for her, too," he says. "She's playing the mom."

Reaching a new audience with this work is also a goal.

"A good portion of [GET's] subscribers won't have any previous experience with my work, and that's kind of exciting," Payne says. "I'm hoping the Midtown crowd will make the drive out for this one, and that the Roswell audiences will make the drive in next time I'm produced in Atlanta."

"Tokens of Affection" contains no gay content, but Payne still hopes LGBT audiences will see it.

"The only gay theme in this joint is me, but I play my theme pretty loud," he admits. "I'd hope that LGBT audiences would learn the same thing from this play that straight audiences would: Finding a partner, building a life, it's a tricky, beautiful, constantly evolving thing. But if you manage to find that partnership, no matter what it looks like, it's absolutely worth celebrating."

*Left: 'Tokens of Affection' features gay playwright **Topher Payne** as director as well. (Photo by Robert Kohl). Above: Gay people can relate to themes of being misunderstood in 'Beauty and the Beast,' according to gay actor Anthony Fett (not pictured). (Photo by Joan Marcus / Theatre of the Stars)*

'Beast' is back

Next week, the national tour of "Beauty and the Beast" returns to Atlanta. It's based on the Oscar-winning movie with music by Alan Menken and lyrics by the late Howard Ashman, who was gay.

Gay actor Anthony Fett is a part of the ensemble, as well as the understudy for the characters of Lumiere and the Beast. He has been with the musical since it kicked off its latest tour last January, and feels audiences still love the tale of the outsider Beast, as well as the music.

Fett admits his favorite number is "Be Our Guest," which is even more elaborate onstage, with teacups and all sorts of utensils cavorting around the stage.

"I grew up watching all those Disney movies as a kid, singing all the songs," he says. "I never really dreamed that I would be part of a show like this."

To get ready for the major roles in case he has to go on as either character, he rehearses religiously.

"You have to be ready," he says. "You study as if you were playing the roles full-time." He actually performed onstage as the Beast four times in Tucson last year.

Fett says that obvious parallels can be drawn between the Beast and LGBT audiences.

"I can relate to the Beast," he says. "He is having an internal struggle, feeling misunderstood. I think we can all understand that kind of feeling."

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TRAVEL by Jo Giraudo

Out on the slopes

LGBT ski weeks offer winter sports plus plenty of parties

Try heading to the snow-covered mountains between now and April if you want to let your inner rugged self come out. The ski season is when Western, Northern and Canadian mountain towns really come to life. All of the best snow towns have learned that the LGBT community loves to ski and party, and annual Ski Weeks have blossomed everywhere from major ski resorts to nearby North Carolina.

Even non-skiers or snow boarders go to these annual white parties and join in the fun. If you want to keep your rugged self on flat ground there are plenty of dances, costume parties, entertainers, and people watching at these ski weeks to get your adrenaline flowing.

For all things ski-related, the go-to authority is Ski Bums, billed as the world's largest club for LGBT skiers and snowboarders. They offer equipment purchase discounts, skill improvement programs and skier networking. Ski Bums also knows all the buzz on the larger, international ski weeks, an members are offered smaller ski events like a women's trip to Vail & Beaver Creek (Jan. 19-23); the group's first trip to Park City, Utah, to coincide with the Sundance Film Festival (Jan. 25-30); and a 50-participant trip to Stowe, Vt. (Feb. 3-6).

Chris French, president of Ski Bums, calls Aspen, Colo., Gay Ski Week the first and largest LGBT winter event in the world. Now in its 34th year, Aspen offers four mountains, 5,300 miles of terrain and endless shopping, food and hotel options. Roaring Fork Gay & Lesbian Community Fund raises money during the week to promote tolerance, understanding and diversity. The theme this year is the "Wild, Wild West," with events scheduled from Jan. 16-23.

The second of the top two ski weeks — north of the border in Whistler, B.C., — attracts the more party-oriented skiers. The 19th annual Winter Pride is held in the home of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

GayWhistler.com is the producer of LGBT events year round, but the Winter Pride ski week is the best known. During the week organizers host a CowBoy & CowGirl Party, comedian Michele Balan and a Winter Pool Party. This year's event is set for Jan. 30 to Feb. 6.

Telluride, Colo., is called the Top Gay Ski Week in the United States by Gay.com. T-11 events include the Academy Awards watching party, White Night Party, Wet-Pool Party and top rated skiing and snowborading. The week, Feb. 24 to March 5, helps fund the Telluride AIDS Benefit.

"Elevation 2011," the 9th annual Mammoth, Calif., Gay Ski Week, is considered the third largest in North America. From March 16-20, they intend to bring more than 2,000 men and women up to the High Sierras for a variety of fun, including seven major parties. Take a night ride up the gondola and dance at The Party@10,000 Feet.

New this year is an LGBT ski week in Crested Butte, Colo. Crested Butte Mountain Resort and StraightOut Media & Marketing have teamed to host the first annual Matthew Shepard Foundation Gay Ski Week, March 19-26. Events include the annual Al Johnson Uphill/Downhill Race, the Purple Party, Shoot the Butte Bar Crawl and Soul Train Dance Party.

Aspen Gay Ski Week is now in its 34th year, offering plenty of fun for LGBT visitors both on and off the slopes. (Photo courtesy Gayskiweek.com)

East coast options

Closer to home, you can drive to the upcoming Summit Ski Weekend in Blowing Rock, N.C., set for Jan. 20-23. The third annual North Carolina Gay Ski Weekend is presented by NC Mountain Boys and JustTwirl.com, with activities at Crestwood Resort and Spa.

In addition to skiing at Sugar and Beech mountains, events include a pool/dance party, wine tastings, shopping trips and Summit Live, with comic Julie Goldman from Logo's "Big Gay Sketch Show." The Snowball 2011 dance party features DJ/Producer Seth Cooper.

Further to our north, "Winter Rendezvous" is the theme of this year's Gay Ski Week in Stowe, Vt., set for Jan. 19-23.

Pricing for all ski weeks vary depending on your participation. Expect to pay between $150-$750 plus food, drinks and accommodations.

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

Ski Bums
Gay & Lesbian Skiing & Snowboarding Club
www.ski-bums.org

Aspen, Colo., Gay Ski Week
Jan. 16-23
www.gayskiweek.com

Winter Rendezvous
Gay Ski Week in Stowe, Vt.
Jan. 19-23
www.mjwadventures.com/winterrendezvous_index.php

Blowing Rock, N.C.
Summit Ski Weekend
Jan. 20-23
www.ncmountainboys.com

Winter Pride in Whistler, B.C.
Jan. 30-Feb. 6
www.gaywhistler.com

Telluride, Colo., Gay Ski Week
Feb. 25-March 5
www.telluridegayskiweek.com

Mammoth, Calif., Gay Ski Week
March 16-20
www.mammothgayski.com

Matthew Shepard Foundation Gay Ski Week
Crested Butte, Colo.
March 19-26
www.matthewshepardgayskiweek.com

Vail, Colo., Gay Ski Week
March 30 - April 3
www.vailgayskiweek.com

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FIERCE DISHES by Rob Andrews

Comfort food for cold days

Little Bangkok delights with warm Thai favorites

It's a chilly night, you're broke because of the holidays and you want a fabulous flavorful meal. Head to Little Bangkok on Cheshire Bridge Road, voted best Asian by Creative Loafing. This is one of Atlanta's original Thai restaurants and is a perfect little dive on the eclectic "Bridge."

Little Bangkok has been open for 17 years. It's another circumstance of gays leading the food trends in Atlanta. Now Thai is on every street corner. If you had a gourmet grandmother who was Thai this would be her place. It's decorated in kitschy far eastern décor with laser fast precision service. There is usually a wait and no waiting area but the line moves fast.

Little Bangkok has excellent specials like the soft shell crab or whole fried fish, but I'm a creature of habit and tend to gravitate toward my comfort favorites. Start with the classic basil rolls with thin rice paper, shrimp, and glass noodles dipped in the Asian BBQ-like hoisin sauce.

Next move on to the Larb, which used to be very unique. Now Larb is ubiquitous, but Little Bangkok still does it best with minced chicken and fiery spices cooled off in a soothing lettuce wrap.

But here is why you go to Little Bangkok. They have the best Tom Ka Soup ever. Y'all, this is not low fat coconut milk. It's very old school and served in a circular pewter bowl with a lump of that hot flaming "lava" at the top. It looks like one of the '70s pu pu platters you saw in a James Bond movie.

I want to swim in the thick, rich coconut broth spiked with thai chilies and lemon grass, chicken, green onion and mushrooms. Have a shot of sake and this soup and you'll feel pure bliss. My favorite curry dish is the shrimp masaman.

I order it spicy with shrimp and chicken, which has rich curry and coconut "gravy" which I ladle over classic sticky rice. The masaman is a rich amalgamation of shrimp, chicken, avocado, cashews and potatoes, enrobed in a decadent spicy layered sauce — again you have to ask for spicy. Kind of like at a gay bar — ask for spicy and you get it.

Little Bangkok also serves lunch and a killer Thai coffee that will give you a zingy energy buzz so don't drink them at night like I did or you might be up till 3 a.m.

Also 'souper'

Souper Jenny in Buckhead has a constant rotating menu of scratch artisanal soups and if you catch Jenny on the right day you'll have the chicken noodle soup of which dreams are made. Permanently on the menu is her Chunky Turkey Chili. It a very healthy bowl full of protein and fiber so you'll keep that New Year's resolution.

Jenny also concocts bowls of art like Mayan Chicken topped with avocado, tortilla chips and lime, and vegetarian winter root veggie topped with maple chipotle creme fraiche. They are usually open just for lunch and offer sandwiches as well.

Little Bangkok offers Thai comfort food perfect for cold days when you want something warm and filling. (Photo courtesy Little Bangkok)

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

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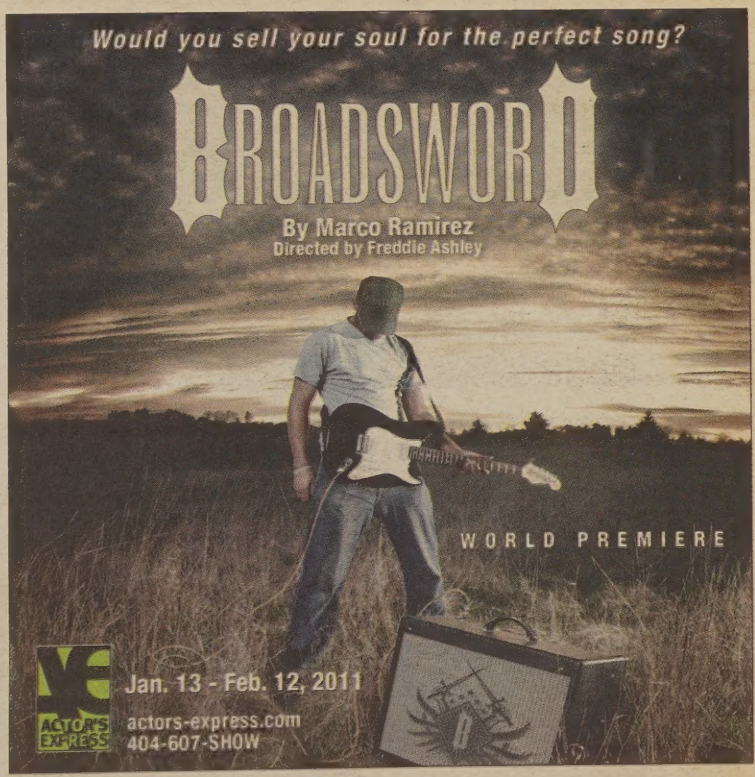

EVENTS

New Year's Eve 2010

Bellissima

Le Sexoflex at the Drunken Unicorn

Bellissima

Le Sexoflex at the Drunken Unicorn

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COMMUNITY LOCAL LIFE

Celebrating King's dream

ATL gay promoters and activists honor legacy of MLK

*By **Ryan Lee***

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. noted that the gulf between different groups of people was widened not only by outright racism, but also by the unspoken acceptance of the status quo. Although the white and black gay populations in King's hometown have gained tremendous vibrancy and clout since his era, modern Atlanta's gay social scene can sometimes feel as segregated as 1950s lunch counters and water fountains.

"We're creatures of habit, and we tend to stick to things and people that we are accustomed to," says Gregory Allen, CEO of Xtreme Entertainment, which hosts "The Lion's Den" parties. "We tend to stay in our own neighborhoods, we tend to party in our own circles.

"There are so many subsets of the LGBT community, and without actually taking the initiative or making the effort to really bring the cultures together, everyone just goes to their own corner — African-Americans partying in their own circle, Caucasians partying in their own circle, Hispanics partying in their own circle," he adds.

The Lion's Den party on the Sunday of MLK weekend is a perennial highlight of a nightlife line-up that draws thousands of black LGBT visitors to Atlanta every January. Allen is aiming for this year's party, themed "International Male 2011," to be more inclusive than ever.

"We want to create an atmosphere where everyone can come together, and what better time to do it than the celebration of Dr. King," Allen says. "The LGBT community sometimes can be very segmented as different ethnicities and cultures party in their own comfort zone, and so the goal of this event is to really create an international-type party that brings together a variety of cultures, races and ethnicities."

Mini Pride Weekend

The Lion's Den party at Club Europe on Jan. 16 will be the first time the cast of the new reality show "The Life: Atlanta" will be unveiled. Backed by a former producer of "The Real Housewives of Atlanta," the reality show follows several black gay men in Atlanta, and is being shopped around to networks.

Several divas from "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" will be in attendance to introduce the cast of "The Life: Atlanta," and to party to the sounds of DJ Sedrick and DJ Ron Pullman.

***Craig Washington** is co-founder of Atlanta's Bayard Rustin – Audre Lorde Breakfast, which commemorates black gay leaders during the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. (File photo)*

Another marquee event during MLK weekend is the Saturday night party at Traxx, which typically draws several thousand people each year. Traxx has yet to solidify its entertainment line-up for its party, dubbed "The Movement," but co-owner Philip Boone says the club is hoping to bring in a Grammy Award-winning songstress more recently known for her primetime dancing.

"We've got a lot of out-of-towners coming in that are expecting big things from us, so we're trying to live up to everybody's expectations," Boone says, noting how MLK weekend has become a mini Black Gay Pride in Atlanta, second only to Labor Day weekend.

"Over the years, it just became a bigger thing," he says. "It used to be that we would get the people from Macon, or a lot of the cities and states that are surrounding Atlanta and Georgia, but now you're getting people from D.C. and other parts of the country, and it's become this broad circuit weekend.

"Atlanta's just one of those destinations where people can come to the city and feel comfortable being gay," he adds. "It should be a great weekend."

In addition to their massive Saturday night party, the owners of Traxx are also christening their new club during MLK weekend. Known as the Xcess Ultra Lounge, the club is in the same spot as bygone icons Club 708 and Loretta's, and Traxx re-establishes its presence in the heart of the city with a "Welcome to Atlanta" party Jan. 14.

WassupNATL is also hosting parties throughout the weekend, titled "Freedom 2011."

Traxx Girls gets in on the MLK Weekend action as well, hosting the Movement Ball on Sunday, Jan. 17, with competitions for women, butches and transmen in a variety of categories.

Also for the women, Ladies at Play hosts its Winter Pride Bash on Sunday night.

Rustin/Lorde Breakfast remembers black gay leaders

It's rare that community-oriented events are as lively as nightclubs during holiday weekends, but the Bayard Rustin/Audre Lorde community breakfast has blossomed into a standing-room-only affair. The 10th annual breakfast, which last year drew about 200 people, takes place Monday, Jan. 17, at St. Mark United Methodist Church.

Created by Atlanta activists Darlene Hudson and Craig Washington, the breakfast honors Rustin, an influential gay adviser to King, and Lorde, the celebrated lesbian and feminist poet. The organizing committee for Atlanta's citywide MLK march and rally has always been explicit in welcoming LGBT participation, and Washington says the first breakfast in 2002 was an attempt to build bridges between the two communities.

"The [citywide MLK] march was something that I thought should be more touted among the Atlanta LGBT community," Washington says. "So here was the opportunity to provide people with a chance to connect before going to the march, have a bite to eat, get some coffee."

The early years of the Rustin/Lorde breakfast attracted several dozen attendees, many of whom were plugged into progressive activism. However, the event has become increasingly popular for people who might not usually wake up early on a holiday Monday.

"As this sort of social justice-themed event, it's definitely user-friendly, or even pop-friendly," Washington says. "I think it models for us how we can go about this work in a way that people don't feel like they have to have that activist label, or some formal social-action experience to contribute or participate."

Washington credits the breakfast's panache to the young people who have joined him and Hudson as organizers of the annual event. Cultivating young leaders will be one of the focuses of this year's breakfast, along with gender and transgender justice, and drawing attention to the impact of HIV/AIDS on blacks and gay men as the disease approaches its 30th anniversary.

Washington says he is in awe of how the breakfast has evolved over the past decade.

"It confirms possibilities," he says.

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

Wednesday, Jan. 12

Party at Door 44, 10 p.m.
44 12th St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309
www.wassupnatl.com

Thursday, Jan. 13

Montee St. James Drag Show, 11 p.m
The Xcess Ultra Lounge, 708 Spring St.
www.traxxatlanta.com

Welcome to Atlanta, 11 p.m.
Centennial Inn Penthouse
111 Cone Street N.W., Atlanta, GA 30303
www.wassupnatl.com

Friday, Jan. 14

Welcome to Atlanta party, 11 p.m.
The Xcess Ultra Lounge, 708 Spring St.
www.traxxatlanta.com

Destination Fridays
Club ATL (Peachtree Ballroom)
3365 Buford Highway, Atlanta, GA 30329
WassupNATL, www.wassupnatl.com

Saturday, Jan. 15

"Freedom in Art," 3:30 - 7 p.m.
The Rush Center at 1530 DeKalb Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307
Presented by In the Life Atlanta; celebrates MLK Jr. Features author Michael Christopher and special guest Sean Lamont, www.inthelifeatl.com

The Movement party, 11 p.m.
Traxx at 1287 Columbia Dr.
www.traxxatlanta.com

Live Saturdays, 11 p.m.
Vita-Buckhead
2110 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30309
WassupNATL, www.wassupnatl.com

Sunday, Jan. 16

NOH8 Campaign Open Photo Shoot, 3-7 p.m.
W Hotel - Midtown Atlanta
188 14th St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30361
Cost: Photos are $40 per person while any group or couple photos will require a $25 fee per person in the photo., www.noh8campaign.com

The Movement Ball, 4 p.m.
Scores @ Undergroud Atlanta at 50 Upper Alabama St.
Competitions for women, butch and transmen
www.traxxgirls.com

Grown and Sexy Sundays, 6 p.m.
Django's at 495 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30308
Performance by Chico Debarge
www.wassupnatl.com

Ladies at Play Winter Pride Bash, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.
Peasant Bistro at 250 Park Ave. West, Atlanta, GA 30313

The Lion's Den "International Male 2011," 11 p.m.
Club Europe at 4001 Presidential Parkway
www.thelionsdenatlanta.com

Monday, Jan. 17

Bayard Rustin/Audre Lorde Community Breakfast
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at St. Mark United Methodist Church
781 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30308
facebook.com/event.php?eid=131839083542875

Martin Luther King Jr. March & Rally, 1:30 p.m.
March: Auburn Avenue from Peachtree Street to Jackson Street
Rally: Auburn Avenue in King National Park Area
www.mlkmarchaaar.org

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

Decatur Women's Sports League supports lesbian health

The Decatur Women's Sports League first began in March 2007. With softball as the initial sport, 200 happy lesbians (and allies) finally found a league of their own.

From that point on, the sports interest grew and additions were made that included bowling, basketball, tennis, volleyball and badminton.

"With much diversity and a cooperative spirit these women all played recreation ball, made friends, got exercise and donated money to the Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative to help underinsured women to go to the doctor and receive mammograms and health care," says Anne "Sarge" Barr, founder and commissioner of the league.

The Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative honored Barr with its 2008 "Healing Angel" award for her work with the sports league and the money it has raised. As of Fall 2010, the Decatur Women's Sports League has donated $50,000 to the health initiative.

ALHI has also honored Barr as one of it its "Real Women" of the month. "Anne Barr's own healing journey through sports began as a little girl who attended a strict Catholic school, and who, after a few short years, was no longer allowed to play with the boys because she was, after all, a girl," ALHI notes on its website. "When finally at age nine she was allowed to play on a girls' softball team, her tomboy spirit joyfully blossomed again."

Now Barr also enjoys helping relationships blossom between lesbians and the general community through interactions with the sports league.

"Working with the community and building bridges and relationships with the City of Decatur and Dekalb County Recreation Departments, as well as some local churches who have assisted in renting us gyms when needed, has been a great blessing," Barr says. "I am proud of this league for representing us in a way that others welcome us and join us in a positive effort to improve lives."

***Linda Ellis** (top photo, left), Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative executive director, presented the group's 2008 Healing Angel Award to **Anne Barr** (right) for the Decatur Women's Sports League's support for women's health. (Photo via Facebook)*

MORE INFO

Decatur Women's Sports League
404-210-4722
www.decaturwomen.com

Basketball is currently underway and runs through Jan. 27 and bowling started Jan. 5. Softball resumes in March.

"We are one big family and we look to grow with soccer and kickball coming also," Barr says.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Kai Lin Art showcases local artists

Gallery Director Yu-Kai Lin first opened the contemporary Kai Lin Art in January 2009 to showcase artistic collections in the heart of Midtown Atlanta.

"I opened Kai Lin Art because I knew so many local, talented emerging and established artists who needed a platform to exhibit their works of art," says Lin, who is gay. "The pieces offered in our gallery range from paintings to photography, sculptures to one of a kind handcrafted art —all at affordable prices."

A graduate of Atlanta's Emory University, Lin gained experience at Lowe Gallery and Mason Murer Fine Art before opening his own gallery.

Throughout the year, Kai Lin Art hosts eight opening exhibitions as well as many monthly community events from fundraisers to fashion shows, weddings to cocktail parties.

The current exhibit is "Joy," which opened Dec. 10 and runs through Jan. 19, featuring 15 artists.

"My gallery is unique in that as we continue to draw ever larger crowds who come to enjoy incredible contemporary art, we also provide a great gathering space for our community," Lin says.

MORE INFO

Kai Lin Art
800 Peachtree St. Suite D
Atlanta, GA 30308
www.kailinart.com

***Yu-Kai Lin** is owner and gallery director of Kai Lin Art, which focuses on emerging-artists and is also a popular venue for LGBT and other events. The current exhibit is 'Joy.' (Photo courtesy Yu-Kai Lin)*

The gallery combines a diverse showcase including art platforms such as canvas, photography, sculptures and handcrafted pieces. It is open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and also by appointment and for special events and openings.

— Tristan Skye

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Amsterdam Cafe
Brushstrokes
Burkhart's
Landmark Diner
AID Atlanta
Radial Cafe
14th Street Playhouse
Three-Legged Cowboy
Southern Sweets Bakery
Starbucks at Decatur Square
Charis Books & More
My Sister's Room
Christ Covenant MCC
Cowtippers
Las Margaritas
Poster Hut
Roasters Rotisserie
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BEST BETS 01.07 - 01.20

ADD YOUR EVENT
There are two ways to add your events to our online and print calendars. Submit your info to **www.theGAVoice.com** or e-mail details to **editor@theGAVoice.com**.

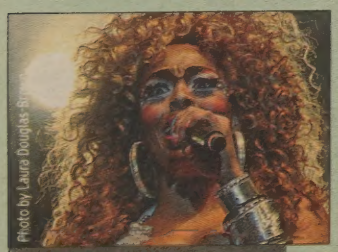
SPOTLIGHT

Saturday, Jan. 8

Folk musician **Patty Larkin**, who is gay, brings her tunes to Red Light Café, 553 Amsterdam Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30306, www.pattylarkin.com

Saturday, Jan. 15

Lance Forrest will be on hand for the DVD release of **"Epidemic Chronicles,"** his film focusing on HIV. 2 -3 p.m. at Outwrite Books. 991 Piedmont Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.outwritebooks.com



Tuesday, Jan. 18

Enjoy **Twisted Trivia** with the **Lady Shabazz** at 7 p.m. followed by **"So You Think You Have Talent"** at 10 p.m. and sign up for "Wild Card" Talent. Blake's on the Park. 227 10th St NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com

Friday, Jan. 7

Barry Brandon, Tim Essary and **Jessi Lynn** rock out at The Highland Ballroom. $5 tickets at the door. 9 p.m. at 644 North Highland Ave., Atlanta, GA 30306, www.barrybrandonsmusic.com

Immerse yourself in Hip Hop and R&B drag entertainment with **Swagger Friday** hosted by **Tiff-nay, Skyler Lee, Shaun Daniels, Jolene Dover** and **Romeo Lee** at My Sister's Room. 9 p.m. - 3: a.m. 1271 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316, www.mysistersroom.com

Enjoy live **VJ Mister Richard** showcasing new release videos, classic videos and all time favorites at Mixx. 9:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m. 1492 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.mixxatlanta.com

Saturday, Jan. 8

Southern Bears meet at Amsterdam. Visitors are welcome to the monthly meetings with "the friendliest bear organization in the South." 7:05 - 8:05 p.m. 502 Amsterdam Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30306, www.southernbears.org

"Dali 'Til Dawn with the Imperial OPA!" is a send-off for the celebrated Salvador Dali exhibit that closes Jan. 9 at the High Museum. The museum is open for 31 hours to give visitors one last chance to see the exhibit, while the Saturday night party includes circus juggling, dancing and balancing acts. 11 p.m. - 1 a.m. at the High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309

DJ Susan Morabito spins at Jungle Club Atlanta. Doors open at 10 p.m. 2115 Faulkner Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.jungleclubatlanta.com

Sunday, Jan. 9

Watch your favorite **Sunday Spectacular** drag queens and pick up a free raffle ticket at the front door for a chance to win a $50 gift card. 9 p.m. - midnight at Burkhart's, 1492-F Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.burkharts.com

Following up on her successful "Life Is a Verb," **Patti Digh** presents a book that leads readers by both heart and head to acknowledge, reinforce, and use their own creative spirit. 6 - 7:30 p.m. 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.charisbooksandmore.com

Monday, Jan. 10

The **Atlanta Police Department's LGBT Advisory Group** holds a meeting open to the public. Tonight's agenda includes discussion of the settlement and police department changes in the wake of the Atlanta Eagle lawsuit; transgender crime statistics; and an update on city DUI and road checks, among other issues. 7 p.m. in City Council Committee Room 2, Atlanta City Hall, 55 Trinity Ave., Atlanta, GA 30303

Photo via www.nicolepbrooks.com

Friday, Jan. 7

"Dragnique" is the new seven-week search to find Atlanta's freshest talent, led by weekly head judge **Nicole Paige Brooks**. Doors open at 9:30 p.m. Cover $5. Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Road, Atlanta, GA 30324. www.jungleclubatlanta.com

MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS www.theGAVoice.com

Looking for more events? Visit our website for our extensive daily calendar, including nightlife schedules and community organization meetings, provided by our friends at ProjectQAtlanta.com.

Join **Bubba D. Licious** for dinner as "Dragamaki" takes a new home at Las Margaritas and becomes **"Dragamundo."** 8 - 11 p.m. 1842 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.lasmargaritasmidtown.com

Tuesday, Jan. 11

The **Atlanta Lesbian & Gay Chamber of Commerce** hosts a **Business Builder Lunch**. 11:45 a.m. at Brio Tuscan Grille. 2964 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30306, www.atlantagaychamber.org

"Writing Real Colored Girls" is the third installment of the ongoing discussion about media representations of black women, which was prompted by a desire to respond to Tyler Perry's film "For Colored Girls" at Charis Books & More. 7:30 - 9 p.m. 1189 Euclid Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307, www.charisbooksandmore.com

Wednesday, Jan. 12

PALS presents **"Miss'd America Pageant"** Bingo with host **Bubba D. Licious** and co-host **Nicole Paige Brooks** at Jungle Club. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. 2115 Faulkner Road, Atlanta, GA 30324 www.palsatlanta.org

Disney's **"Beauty and the Beast"** runs through Jan. 16 at the Fox Theater. 660 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30308. www.foxtheater.org

Gay Fathers of Atlanta gathers for dinner at Moe's on Ponce at 6:30 p.m. and holds a support group meeting at Atlanta / Fulton County Public Library 7:30 - 9 p.m. Fulton Library, 980 Ponce De Leon Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30306, www.gfoatlanta.org

Thursday, Jan. 13

Basketball night! Alley oop, dunk or just cheer the ladies on with the **Decatur Women's Sports League**. Game times are 7, 8 & 9 p.m. Decatur First United Methodist Church. 300 East Ponce De Leon Ave., Decatur, GA, 30030. www.decaturwomenssportsleague.info

Charis hosts **"Out of the Shadows,"** a discussion of domestic violence and immigrant communities, featuring **Alyse López-Salm** of the Partnership Against Domestic Violence. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.charisbooksandmore.com

"The Happy New Year Health, Safety and Community Fair" offers information for the LGBT community and is a novice project by one of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. 4 - 7:30 p.m. at Amsterdam Atlanta, 502-A Amsterdam Ave NE, Atlanta, GA, 30306, www.amsterdamatlanta.com

Friday, Jan. 14

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday means multiple parties all weekend targeting black LGBT Atlantans and visitors, as well as allies, for what has become known as Winter Pride. See story and calendar on page 22.

BEDLAM presents **"Seven Sinners Sinning,"** a night to come dressed as one of the seven sins. Best costume wins $20 bar tab. $6 cover before midnight. **DJ Shane V.** Live performance by SDR. 10 p.m. - 3:30 a.m. My Sister's Room. 1271 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA, www.mysistersroom.com

Free STD screenings. 2 - 7 p.m. at Positive Impact, 139 Ralph McGill Blvd., Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30308. www.positiveimpact-atl.org

Saturday, Jan. 15

The **Akoma Book Club** (of Women Healing Women) meets at Charis Books & More. 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.charisbooksandmore.com

Brew Not Bombs Potluck & Puppet making workshop with **ATL Queer Collective**. 2:30 p.m. - 2:00 a.m. 757 Arcadia Ave., Decatur, GA 30030, brewnotbombsatl@gmail.com

Same-Day HIV testing at Positive Impact. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 139 Ralph McGill Blvd., Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30308. www.positiveimpact-atl.org

Sunday, Jan. 16

Get your very own NOH8 campaign photo! Celebrity photographer Adam Bouska brings his photo project for the first time to Atlanta marking Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. 3 - 6 p.m. at the W Atlanta Midtown Hotel. 188 14th St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30361, www.noh8campaign.com

Lace up roller skates for the **"Love Skate" for Chris KIDS**, which helps youth in need including LGBT young people. 6 - 9 p.m. at Skate-A-Long USA, 744 Beaver Ruin Road NW, Atlanta, GA 30047, www.chriskids.org

Photo by Dhana Bagby, Gauthreaux publicity photo

Saturday, Jan. 15

Join the **Armorettes** followed by **DJ Joe Gauthreaux** at the Heretic. 2069 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.hereticatlanta.com

Papi's Brunch at Las Margaritas includes **DJ Karlitos** playing your favorite beats. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. 1842 Cheshire Bridge Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.lasmargaritasmidtown.com

Monday, Jan. 17

Celebrate **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** with the annual **LGBT Audre Lorde - Bayard Rustin** breakfast in Wade Hall at St. Mark United Methodist Church. Brunch is at 10 a.m.; you can then join in the citywide MLK March & Rally from 1-4 p.m. St. Mark, 781 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30308, www.stmarkumc.org

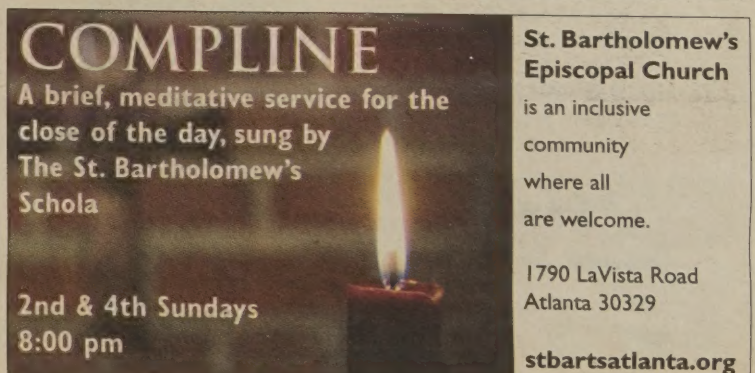
Stars of the Century is led by legendary **Niesha Dupree**. Doors open at 10:30pm, New Kids Show at 11 p.m., Stars of the Century starts at midnight at Jungle Club. 2115 Faulkner Road, Atlanta, GA 30324. www.jungleclubatlanta.com

Piano Mondays with David Reed get started at 8 p.m. at MIXX Atlanta, 1492 Piedmont Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.mixxatlanta.com

Tuesday, Jan. 18

Sing your heart out at **Mary-oke!** Voted Atlanta's best karaoke bar visit host CJ for this ultimate experience only at Mary's. 9 p.m. - 2:30 a.m. 1287 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316, www.marysatlanta.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26


COMPLINE
A brief, meditative service for the close of the day, sung by The St. Bartholomew's Schola
2nd & 4th Sundays
8:00 pm
St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
is an inclusive community where all are welcome.
1790 LaVista Road
Atlanta 30329
stbartsatlanta.org

EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

Odd Man Out Theater Company presents **"The Drive-By Theater Project"** at 7 Stages in L5P at 7:30 p.m. Runs through Jan. 23. 1105 Euclid Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307, www.oddmanouttheater.com

Wednesday, Jan. 19

Ruby Redd hosts a fun-tastic night of **Birdcage Bingo** to help support CHRIS Kids. 8-10 p.m. at Mellow Mushroom, 931 Monroe Drive, Atlanta, GA 30308

Thursday, Jan. 20

MEGA Family Project presents **"Waiting for the Stork,"** a monthly group for prospective parents. 7 – 8:30 p.m. at the Rush Center, 1530 Dekalb Avenue, Suite A, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.megafamilyproject.org

"Shakesqueer" puts exciting queer theorists in conversation with the complete works of William Shakespeare. 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Outwrite Bookstore & Cofeehouse, 991 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.outwritebooks.com

Thursday, Jan. 20

Princess Charles has gathered some of Atlanta's finest **"Fashionistas"** for a night of drag galore at Burkhart's Pub. 11:30 p.m. 1492 Piedmont Ave NE #F, Atlanta, GA 30309 www.burkh arts.com

Mingle with the **Cliterati** at Charis. An open mic and reading series on the 3rd Thursday of every month. 7:30 – 9 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307 www.charisbooksandmore.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Jan. 22

DJ/Producer Micky Friedman from Berlin spins at Jungle Club Atlanta. Doors open at 10 p.m. 2115 Faulkner Road, Atlanta, GA 30324. www.jungleclubatlanta.com

Sunday, Jan. 23

It's **LGBT Skate & Date Single Night** at Cascade. Come out to a night full of dancing, skating, flirting, and great beats. $7 cover, $2 skate rental. 8 p.m. – midnight. 3335 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Atlanta, GA, www.facebook.com/lgbtloveatlanta

Wednesday, Jan. 26

Enjoy **"Women of Rock"** with **Caroline Aiken, Donna Hopkins** and **Diane Durrett** at Eddie's Attic. 8 p.m. at 515-B North McDonough St., Decatur, GA 30030, www.eddiesattic.com

Thursday, Jan. 27

Atlanta local musician **Sonia Leigh** takes co-headline with **Gaelic Storm**. 8 p.m. at Variety Playhouse in Little 5 Points, 1099 Euclid Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307, www.sonialeigh.com

Friday, Jan. 28

Come out to see hottie front man Jared Leto with **Thirty Seconds to Mars** as they take the stage at the Tabernacle at 8 p.m. 152 Luckie Street, Atlanta, GA 30303, www.ticketmaster.com

Sunday, Jan. 30

The **GLBT Travel Expo Tour** features hotels, airlines, travel deals, destinations, prizes and more. Noon – 5 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel, 75 14th St., Atlanta, GA 30309, Glbttravelexpo.com

Monday, Jan. 31

"Call & Response: An Evening of Poetry with Karen Head & Collin Kelley" is sponsored by the Georgia Center for the Book. 7 – 8 p.m. at Decatur Public Library, 215 Sycamore St., Decatur, GA 30030, www.georgiacenterforthebook.com

DOMESTICALLY DISTURBED

The backup plan

It was hard enough to find my one-and-only. Now I need a second?

Topher Payne is an Atlanta-based playwright, and the author of the book "Necessary Luxuries: Notes on a Semi-Fabulous Life." Find out more at topherpayne.com

It's my first day back at work in the new year, and I'm greeted by an email from my boss asking everyone to update their emergency contact information for HR. Is it terrible that I have to double-check my husband's phone number every time I'm asked to provide it?

My grandmother's been dead for 15 years, but her number I could tell you. I learned it when I was five. It was the only number I knew, so I'd call her up and tell her about my day. It couldn't have been all that compelling, but she hung in there anyway, bless her heart.

My husband? When I try to recite his number from memory, I invariably invert digits. I would claim it's undiagnosed dyslexia, but I know full well I just never memorized the damn thing. The night I met him, I put it in my phone and that was that. I say "Call Preppy," and technology takes care of the rest.

It's a little troubling to realize that if I'm ever mugged the only person I could call for help would be my dead grandmother. Despite her best intentions, I just don't think she'd be all that useful. I suppose I could write it on a piece of paper and keep it in my wallet, but if I got mugged I bet they'd take the wallet too. My dog has a little microchip that identifies who she belongs to if she ever gets lost. Perhaps I could get one of those.

So I look up Preppy's number, enter it on the form, and then I'm struck by a surprising follow-up request: SECONDARY Emergency Contact. This is just unfair. It was hard enough managing to identify who would be my one-and-only in life, and now I gotta choose a backup?

But there is real wisdom here: Preppy and I don't tend to answer unknown numbers because it's usually people wanting money, so if I was attacked by a bobcat and someone called to tell him about it, he'd likely let it roll over to voicemail. I would need the back-up person to actually respond to the bobcat attack phone call.

"Tell me exactly what would be expected of me in this role," says my pal Mandy on the phone when I call.

"You're just the person they call if they can't reach Preppy. It's nothing huge, I just gotta have a backup person."

"But what if we can't find him and you need to be unplugged from something? Do I have to make decisions about your power supply?"

"You're reading way too much into this. Why would you not be able to find my husband? Where would he be?"

"I don't know. Why are *you being attacked by a bobcat? Where the hell were you?"*

"You don't have to be my back-up. I can call my sister."

"Oh, no. Now I'm excited. But who makes the decisions on plugs if the bobcat gets Preppy too?"

I was not expecting my first workday of 2011 to feature mediation on my mortality. I have absolutely no idea who would make the plug-or-unplug decisions if that bobcat managed to get us both. Who would feed the dog?

The only person with a key to our house is our friend Ginger in Colorado, which is about as efficient as a dead grandmother in terms of quick response. Why haven't I thought of these things before? In spite of the façade created by marriage and home ownership, I am absolutely horrible at being a grownup.

When I get home, I share my to-do list with Preppy. I need to learn his phone number. We need to give house keys to a few of our friends, set up a living will, write out instructions for Daisy's care, and fill out our organ donor cards. Also, I want one of those fireproof boxes like my Dad has, and I'd like to find out what goes in it. Something horrible could happen at any moment. He takes this in.

"You don't know my phone number?" he says at last.

I concede that I do not.

"Why don't you start with learning my phone number?"

I'm pretty sure I can do that. Just in case I can't, I'll write it down, and put it in my fireproof box. And then I'll tell Mandy where it is.

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Saturday 4-11 · Sunday Brunch 11-3, Dinner 4-10

GA VOICE

08.19.11 | Vol. 2, Issue 12 | SPEAK!

+ Positive about HIV

Infections are rising and the disease remains serious. So why are these gay Atlanta men smiling? Page 4

Photo by Carlton Mackey

BLACK GAY PRIDE

Start planning your Labor Day Weekend as Atlanta hosts world's largest black LGBT celebration. **Pages 15, 17**

ALSO INSIDE

- Gay state legislators stung by redistricting. **Page 8**
- Meet the gay voice behind Cirque's 'Dralion.' **Page 25**
- Best Bets: LGBT events you don't want to miss. **Page 34**

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MICHELE BACHMANN ON GOD, THE TEA PARTY, AND THE EVILS OF GOVERNMENT

"On the cover of Newsweek under M. Bachmann's picture it said 'Queen of Rage,' but there is only 'One Raging Queen' in her house!"

Actress, singer and gay rights advocate Cher, continuing her Twitter war with GOP presidential hopeful Rep. **Michele Bachmann**. Bachmann's husband, Marcus Bachmann, runs a therapy practice that attempts to convert gays and has been the subject of Internet rumors that he is gay himself. (Towleroad.com, Aug. 14)

Photo by Mike Carano / via Carolla's Facebook

"When did everybody get lumped in with the gays? You know what I mean? ... When did we start giving a shit about [transgender] people? ... And shouldn't [LGBT] be something that spells something, like YUCK?"

– Comedian **Adam Carolla**, ranting on his Aug. 11 podcast about the term "LGBT" and the Change.org petition that wants to see Ernie and Bert get married on "Sesame Street." Carolla will podcast live from the Tabernacle in Atlanta on Sept. 30. (GLAAD.org, Aug. 15)

"Given his history of anti-gay and racist comments, networks and advertisers should know what their money is supporting if they choose to hire Adam Carolla. The gross intolerance that he tries to pass off as comedy should not have a place on our airwaves."

– Herndon Graddick, senior director of programs at the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, in a press release denouncing Adam Carolla's remarks (GLAAD.org, Aug. 15)

BY THE NUMBERS
EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

42 Percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees who report facing discrimination at work at some point in their lives

16 Percent of LGB people who report that they have lost a job based on their sexual orientation

33 Percent of LGB employees who said they were not out to anyone at work

5.8 Percent of bisexual employees who report being out to everyone at work

78 Percent of transgender people in a separate study who report facing harassment or mistreatment at work

Source: Multiple studies compiled by the Williams Institute, July 2011

Photo by Georges Biard / Wikipedia

"Most gay people are very tasty people – they like beautiful stuff in their lives. If they like me, it means they have taste. They don't follow me for my butt shots."

– Actor **Jean-Claude Van Damme** in a recent interview with Sabotage Times (Towleroad.com, Aug. 14)

Photo via Facebook

"We have people who say, 'States have the right to pass gay marriage.' I say, 'No they do not because they do not have the right to do wrong.'"

– Republican presidential hopeful **Rick Santorum** in a campaign appearance in Iowa, where he placed fourth in a straw poll of GOP contenders (Radio Iowa, Aug. 15)

Positive about HIV

What will it take to stem HIV infections among gay men? For some Atlanta activists, the answer is hope, not fear.

By *Dyana Bagby*
dbagby@thegavoice.com

Uri Butler is a natural in front of the camera. His tall, lanky frame and soft features project confidence, love, happiness — all easily captured by a professional photographer.

Butler, 20, said he's thought of being a model and quickly scans through his cell phone to show photos of him posing in other shoots. Right now, though, he is a junior majoring in biology at Fort Valley State University, located about 90 miles south of Atlanta, and dreams of becoming a nurse.

But on Aug. 13, Butler took a break from his studies to pose for the Evolution Project's new media campaign, set to launch in September to reach out to black, gay young men about HIV prevention. The Evolution Center, a project of AID Atlanta located on Juniper Street, offers programming and resources as well as HIV testing specifically aimed at black gay men.

"I was diagnosed [with HIV] in February," Butler said while watching his friends take their turns in front of the camera. "Normally I get tested every six months; I would get tested in August or September and then again in January of February. At the time I was with my partner. After six months together I showed him my status and he told me he didn't know his status. It was right around that time I tested positive."

New generation of gay men at risk

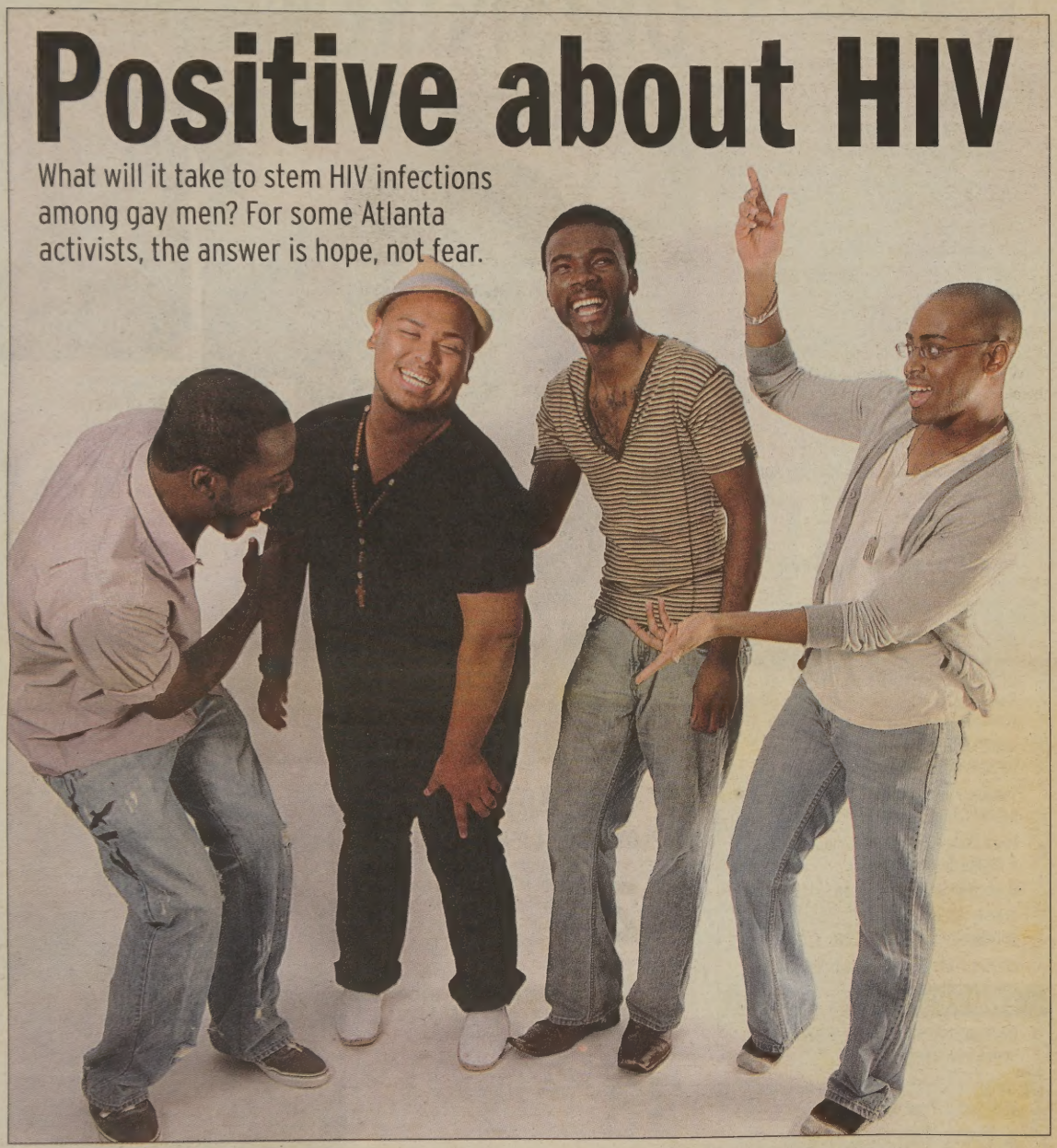
As a 20-year-old black gay man with HIV, Butler is now part of a demographic that has public health officials sounding the alarms. On Aug. 3, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention released data showing that between 2006-2009, black men who have sex with men (MSM) ages 13-29 showed a 48 percent increase in new HIV infections.

The CDC numbers show that in 2006, there were 4,400 HIV infections among black gay and bisexual men ages 13-29. The numbers jumped to 6,500 infections in 2009 within the same age group. This subpopulation represents the only subpopulation in the U.S. to experience a statistically significant increase during these three years.

And while in the U.S. the rate of new HIV infections remains relatively stable at 50,000 new infections a year, gay and bisexual men still account for the highest numbers of new infections — they make up 2 percent of the nation's population but accounted for 61 percent of all new HIV infections in 2009, according to the CDC.

"We are deeply concerned by the alarming rise in new HIV infections in young, black gay and bisexual men and the continued impact of HIV among young gay and bisexual men of all races," said Jonathan Mermin, director of CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, in a statement.

"We cannot allow the health of a new generation of gay men to be lost to a preventable disease. It's time to renew the focus on HIV among gay men and confront the homophobia and stigma that all too often accompany this disease," Mermin added.



Gay Atlanta men are part of a new HIV prevention campaign for the Evolution Project. (Photo by Carlton Mackey)

Fighting stigma with visibility

For Butler, participating in such a public campaign is a way to help others.

"This is my way of showing people who may have felt the same way I felt that you can be happy," he said.

"My initial reaction was not to cry or panic, but to think, 'What next?'" he said. "What do I need to do to ensure my longevity. My initial thought was that this photo shoot will help bring off the film, the stigma."

Butler also said testing HIV positive relieved him of the burden of having to worry about contracting it at some later time.

"Finding out kind of liberated me because now I don't have to worry about it," Butler added. "That's a part of the culture. It's looming everywhere. My thoughts now are that I have something where my body is compromised and instead of running around having sex with everyone, I think that this person might have something that might harm me, like a cold. I feel like I have to focus on my health and being healthy.

"And when I meet people they look at me and say I'm handsome, I'm smart and I have everything going for me. When I disclose my status, they kind of back up a little," he said. "Sometimes I want to be negative and give up. But in the past month my perception has changed. I think the Evolution Center rescued me."

No easy answer to continuing epidemic

HIV is a preventable disease. And to many, it seems simple enough to not contract the virus — just practice safer sex. Gay men have been told for 30 years to use condoms, to not do this, not do that, be careful with every single person you become intimate with. It's enough to wear someone down and for many it becomes part of the background, like white noise.

There are no easy answers for why people, including gay and bisexual men, continue to contract HIV, said Steven Igarashi, gay men's health coordinator for AID Atlanta.

"That's the million dollar question — why? But I don't think it's one issue we can pinpoint. If we could we'd have a solution," Igarashi said.

With the nation 30 years into the pandemic, there comes backlash such as condom fatigue, he added

"And people just tired of hearing about it," Igarashi said.

Abstinence-only sex education in schools contributes to young people being ignorant to the risks of sex, which can be deadly for young people who already believe they are invincible, Igarashi said.

"And in the gay community — and I don't think this mindset is a blanket statement — there is a portion of our community that still looks at HIV as inevitable. They see it is a risk and think they will probably become positive anyway so why take precautions," he said.

AID Atlanta and Positive Impact's MISTER Project are also very conscious about providing programs and resources for gay men that do not force them to come sit in a sterile clinical environment to learn how to be safe or talk about issues they face.

MISTER provides yoga classes and book clubs while Igarashi organizes social outings at bars, coffee shops and restaurants.

"We want to meet men where they are and remove the barriers of them having to come to us as part of building community," Igarashi said.

Researcher: CDC numbers not shocking

David Malebranche, a physician who has focused much of his public health research on black gay men and HIV, is an assistant professor at Emory University's School of Medicine. He said looking for one "smoking gun" as to why HIV infections continue to increase is a fool's mission. He also said the CDC's most recent numbers on young, black gay men are not shocking at all.

"I'm frustrated and annoyed and this fucking emergency has been going on since 1998. It's nothing new. I love the statistics, but they never tell us why. So they keep sounding the alarm — and I don't see research that asks black gay men these questions, like why," he said.

Of course, there is no single answer to "why" black gay men continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV. But Malebranche, who is openly gay, said it is structural — poverty, barriers to access to healthcare, homelessness.

"What's interesting at this point is that the CDC is pushing testing. It's like they are testing every black MSM, which I think is counterproductive at this point," he added.

Photo by Dyana Bagby

'I do this work because I fell in love with my community, I love working with them, coming up with unique ways to reach them and talking about how to save each other.

'Saving each other goes beyond HIV prevention ... it goes to how we form relationships.'

- Chase Andrews

"When people who are not black gay or bisexual men see the numbers impacting black MSMs, they think, 'I'm fine. I'm not part of that risk group' and keep having unprotected sex," Malebranche said.

And for black gay and bisexual men who are bombarded with these numbers, Malebranche says it becomes a "self-fulfilling prophecy."

"You keep overcasting a population. You keep testing more and more black MSMs and you are going to get more and more positive tests. There is an overemphasis on testing and just testing black MSMs. There is no end in sight and it looks like a huge racial disparity," he said.

One thing is certain — black gay and bisexual men do not have more unprotected sex than other demographics. But new CDC studies do show that black MSMs tend to have more STDs, such as syphilis, which makes it easier for the HIV virus to spread.

"It's never been about behavior," Malebranche said.

And if he could have three wishes that he believes would drive down HIV infections among black gay and bisexual men?

"Universal healthcare, proper mentorship and role models for young black gay men, and for religion or spirituality to be more embracing in this country and accept all sexual orientations," he answered.

Chase Andrews, 25, the recruitment and retention specialist for the Evolution Project, disagrees with Malebranche on the CDC's numbers being counterproductive.

"I wasn't shocked, but to see it in black and white was sobering," he said. "People need to know ... so they know this is still an issue."

And why are HIV infections still on the rise?

Gay and bisexual men make up 2 percent of the nation's population but accounted for 61 percent of new HIV infections in 2009

Between 2006-2009, new HIV infections among black gay, bi men ages 13-29 rose 48 percent, from 4,400 to 6,500

Among men who have sex with men in 2009, white MSM represented the greatest number of new HIV infections (11,400), followed closely by black MSM (10,800) and Hispanic MSM (6,000)

"That's the question. Our community isn't really monolithic," Andrews said. "I do this work because I fell in love with my community, I love working with them, coming up with unique ways to reach them and talking about how to save each other.

"Saving each other goes beyond HIV prevention … it goes to how we form relationships."

'Infecting with information'

Chris Barker, 26, a graphic designer who came up with the concept for the Evolution Project's new campaign, spent hours directing Butler and a dozen other young gay black men at the Aug. 13 photo shoot. He is well aware of the CDC numbers that show the staggering increase in new HIV infections within his demographic.

"We are trying to be as aggressive as the numbers," Barker, who is HIV negative, said about the campaign.

"We want to infect with information. This is our community. There is no one place you can go for this demographic. You have black, you have gay, you have local. We are trying to bring all this together to a very techno savvy group and be cohesive so people get the idea of branding. Many think it won't happen to me, but it does. Every day," he said.

Barker said he knew he wanted to stay HIV negative after his friend found out he was HIV positive after first becoming very ill.

"I thought it would be literally overnight that he would disappear. Then I would talk to him and ask what he was doing and he would say he was sitting in line at the IDP [Grady Infectious Disease Program] now. He also had to deal with social and class issues, go through all these avenues just to stay alive," Barker said.

"People are living a lot longer but they don't realize the hindrances. Especially for a young person who is used to always being on the go to now have to stop and wait in line. I know that's not the way I wanted to live," he said.

Barker's passion for the Evolution Project's campaign is easy to see. He knows exactly the look he is going for, how it must be implemented on the web, on social networking sites, on mobile phones, with QR codes.

"We want our demographic inundated with the best, positive messages. HIV is still a taboo subject," he said.

"This campaign is us, literally our friends, neighbors, people we see in the park, the club, walking down 10th Street. Typically when people see our demographic it's after the fact. We are doing more positive stances, postures, than seen in the past — to most effectively reach them you have to be amongst them," he added.

Sex, mind and soul

Nicholas Robinson, 25, who is also a model in the Evolution Project campaign, was raised in a homophobic environment in Columbus, Ga. He said becoming educated about sex was a top priority when he began college at Georgia State University as part of his desire to be a healthy young man. He remains HIV negative.

"In high school there were so many people getting pregnant or engaging in unsafe sex and you would hear these people had STDs and STIs. I wanted to know about condoms, risky behaviors, different positions," he said.

The high number of infections among black gay men shows that the black community is one that is in need, he added.

"It's not just about sexual health but about emotional health," Robinson said. "The need for love becomes so strong and if you lack education you end up with a population that doesn't know how to go about navigating sex, you don't know your own self worth — people need to know they deserve a healthy life and not just what comes along."

Changing the tide of HIV infections in the black gay community — and in all communities — must focus not just on sex but also on the mind and soul, Robinson said. Leaving behind the homophobia of where he was raised planted the seed that he was worthy of having a happy and healthy life.

"I didn't think I would live past the age of 18. But when I started college I got the smallest inkling that I was worthy. It took years for that to become concrete. Gay people deal with a lot of hate, a lot of misinformation is given to us. I didn't know what it was to be valued," he explained.

But over time, Robinson said he developed friendships and relationships that proved to him he is worthy of being alive. That's a message he would like other young black gay men to know.

"If you can find people who will encourage you and support you, that you are not this piece of shit others tell you, find them and keep them around you to move on and forward. If your environment is bad — as soon as you can, get out, go to college. Take the reins and move toward happiness," he said.

Ga. HIV Unit asks CDC for $3 million to eliminate ADAP waiting list

State also investigating spending for HIV prevention

*By **Dyana Bagby***
dbagby@thegavoice.com

Georgia's HIV Unit hopes to eliminate the state's AIDS Drug Assistance Program's waiting list if it can receive a $3 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention this fall.

Some 1,718 Georgians were on the waiting list for ADAP as of Aug. 4, accoding to the ADAP Advocacy Association. The program helps people who are uninsured or underinsured pay for life-saving HIV medications.

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, state commissioner of the Department of Public Health, which oversees the HIV Unit, is quick to point out that the list is not a "death sentence," as 99 percent of people on the list are receiving needed medication through assistance from pharmaceutical companies.

But the list can be used as a "powerful tool" to apply for more federal money to be used for HIV prevention, Fitzgerald said.

"We instituted that [ADAP waiting list] in Georgia to illustrate the need and document the need," she said. "By using that large number [of people on the waiting list] we've applied for an additional $3 million from the CDC," she said.

"The existence of a waiting list is a powerful tool for us when applying for federal funds."

Internal investigation

Georgia's bid for federal funding to help ADAP comes as the state HIV Unit undergoes an internal investigation to determine if the unit — as well as community-based organizations, such as those that conduct outreach to high risk populations including gay and bisexual men — uses the money currently received from the CDC wisely.

"The investigation was initiated by several factors," Fitzgerald said. "As a clinician, I didn't like that there were 1,600 people on the ADAP waiting list. Then we started looking at some of the community-based organizations and some are spending $25 a person, some $75 a person, some more. We want to make sure we are spending money effectively."

In a recent interview with GA Voice, Mark Douglas, a co-founder and the executive director of My Brothaz Home in Savannah and also co-chair of the Georgia HIV Prevention Planning Group, said he and others are frustrated with trying to fulfill their promises to their communities when the HIV Unit sometimes delivers grants months late. The delays force some agencies to lay people off as well as try to rush a year's worth of work into just a few months.

***Brenda Fitzgerald**, state commissioner of the Department of Public Health, says an investigation into the HIV Unit's spending practices and how community organizations use funding is near completion. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)*

"The bureaucracy just takes forever. There are delays [in getting grants]. Sometimes it takes six months or more. That's my biggest complaint," Douglas said. "And that makes it hard on us to deliver contracts."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution recently reported that some clients who rely on the Healthcare Insurance Program to cover premiums for their AIDS medications get cut off suddenly because the HIV Unit fails to deliver checks on time.

While Fitzgerald acknowledges there is much improvement needed in the HIV Unit, she is not willing to take the full blame. She said that some community-based organizations — she declined to say which ones — can take between 28-75 days to get the properly filled out paperwork to the HIV Unit in order for it to cut a check to a client for medications.

This delay of getting in the proper paperwork, which is typically sent back and forth several times using regular mail rather than online between the HIV Unit and the agencies, is also a major reason money is not distributed in a timely manner.

Fitzgerald said she hopes the paperwork can soon be completed online. She also said she'd like to have a person from her office, who knows how to fill out the paperwork correctly the first time, in every agency.

"If it takes between 28 to 75 days to get us the proper paperwork, that's not acceptable," Fitzgerald said. "I've been told the average time it takes us when we get the proper paperwork to cut a check is 10 days."

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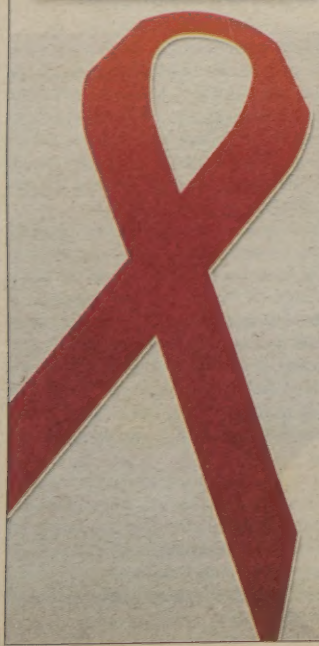
New Study of an HIV Attachment Inhibitor



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Ga. legislative redistricting pits gay lawmakers against gay rights allies

Two out of three openly gay reps may face incumbent opponents

*By **Laura Douglas-Brown & Dyana Bagby***
lbrown@thegavoice.com

Redistricting maps created by Republican leaders in the Georgia House could leave two of the state's three openly gay state lawmakers facing tough battles against fellow incumbents for re-election next year.

"Republican maps are forcing two of the three gay representatives (and the only two African-American LGBT representatives in the nation) into competition with fellow incumbent Democrats, resulting in the potential reduction of gay representation in the House," Democratic Caucus leaders argued in talking points distributed to help build opposition to the proposal.

The Georgia General Assembly began meeting Aug. 15 in a special session to approve the maps, which were released Aug. 12. Redistricting takes place every 10 years after the release of results from the U.S. Census.

The process of reshaping the state's legislative districts is often highly partisan as the controlling political party may attempt to craft districts that will increase its power. The maps approved by the Georgia legislature will also require federal approval to certify that they comply with the Voting Rights Act.

The proposed map released by the House Reapportionment Committee pits Rep. Rashad Taylor (D-Atlanta), who recently came out as gay and is black, against gay-friendly longtime Rep. Pat Gardner (D-Atlanta), who is white. Gardner strongly opposed the 2004 state constitutional amendment that banned gay marriage. The same year, Gardner defeated an openly gay challenger, Alex Wan, in the Democratic primary. Wan now serves on the Atlanta City Council.

State Rep. Simone Bell (D-Atlanta), the first out black lesbian in the nation to serve in a state legislature, may have her district combined with state Rep. Ralph Long (D-Atlanta), who is also black and who supported Rep. Taylor when he came out.

State Rep. Karla Drenner (D-Avondale Estates), Georgia's first openly gay state legislator, does not have her district combined with another incumbent.

Jeff Graham, executive director of statewide gay political group Georgia Equality, said that he didn't think the maps were intentionally drawn to hurt gay lawmakers, but urged LGBT Georgians to speak out about redistricting concerns.

"Considering the large number of incumbents who were pitted against each other, I don't feel that gay and lesbian legislators were specifically targeted," Graham said. "Folks who are upset that their district boundaries have changed, especially if those changes split neighborhoods, should weigh in with their state legislators and should communicate specifically with both the House and Senate leadership."

*State Reps. **Simone Bell** and **Rashad Taylor**, who are openly gay, could be drawn into districts where they will have to face fellow Democratic incumbents for re-election. (File photos)*

For breaking news on redistricting, visit
www.thegavoice.com

Graham said the highly contentious redistricting process shows why Georgia should join other states, including California and Florida, that use independent commissions to draw their legislative maps.

"The gerrymandering that has been done to so many districts, especially in metro Atlanta, is a clear indication that we need a process that is far more fair and thoughtful and less overtly partisan," he said.

The proposed House map, which had not been officially approved as of press time Aug. 16, pits incumbents against each other in 10 districts. Twelve Democratic incumbents, including Bell and Taylor, and eight Republican incumbents are affected.

Democratic leaders warn that if the Republicans are successful in gaining a constitutional majority in both the House and the Senate, meaning they have enough votes to pass constitutional amendments without any Democratic support, LGBT Georgians could be among those at risk.

"The effect of creating a Republican supermajority would be devastating to Georgia citizens, leading to constitutional amendments that have been introduced or passed in other states," the talking points stated, listing "outlawing gay adoption" along with attacks on reproductive rights and immigration, as well as the potential passage of school vouchers and eliminating the income tax by increasing the sales tax.

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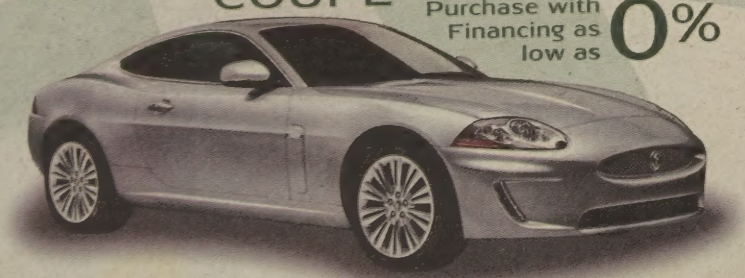

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W HOTELS

Anti-gay street preachers target North Ga. mountains

Small band of protesters bring 'Homo Sex is Sin' signs to Helen

By **Ryan Watkins**
rwatkins@thegavoice.com

The North Georgia mountain town of Helen was the target of an anti-gay demonstration on Aug. 13, featuring signs, gay slurs and even physical harassment, according to Mel Marsh, a transgender man from Covington who witnessed the event.

Marsh contacted the GA Voice about the demonstration in an email that was also sent to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the White County News.

"We witnessed a truly horrible anti-gay religious protest in the middle of the main strip of town. People shouting 'Homo Sex is a Sin' and calling people faggots and all around being a nuisance and not letting anyone get past them," Marsh recalled in the email.

"They were also insulting everyone's religion although this was primarily an anti-gay rally. They were also calling for our (gay people's) deaths. These people were laying hands and grabbing patrons/customers and disrupting business and harassing everyone," he said.

Helen is a recreated Alpine village that sits on the Chattahoochee River in White County, Ga. The town draws tens of thousands of tourists annually and is famous for its German-themed architecture, shops and river tubing during summer months.

Marsh said that he's been visiting Helen for more than 25 years and had never seen anything like the demonstration.

"People are coming here with their kids," he said in a telephone interview this week. "Why on Earth are they doing this crap in Helen?"

Helen and White County are far removed from the state's LGBT hub in Atlanta, but local officials acknowledged that these types of demonstrations have occurred across the county in recent months.

"I was trying to not get too close," Marsh said. "Not like you could because they were drawing a crowd."

Marsh said he only saw one person countering the protesters. When Marsh cheered for the man, someone in the crowd attempted to spit on him, he said.

Helen Police Chief Ted Ray said in a telephone interview that he was aware of the demonstrations but did not know who organized them.

"It's one of those things that people call and complain about the volume, about the loudness of the event, protest, whatever you want to call it," Ray said.

Ray said he believed there were between four and six demonstrators that evening. Marsh estimated there were as many as a dozen protesters.

There were no reports of any physical confrontations, according to the Helen Police Department. No officers were stationed with the protesters.

"Like any other event, other night, we have people patrolling the area," Ray said.

The demonstrators were not required to have a permit, according to Ray, because the event was religious in nature. Other demonstrations or protests would likely require a permit, he said.

"They're not required to have permits for the nature of what they're doing. It's a religious-based type of event. If you're marching or protesting a place or business, yes, you would have to have a permit. This doesn't come under that criteria," Ray said.

Ray believes that the same group has demonstrated in Helen before.

"They come here periodically," he said.

The GA Voice could not confirm the identities of the protesters, but their tactics and signs are similar to an affiliation of Georgia street preachers who have taken anti-gay messages to events like Atlanta Pride and Augusta Pride, as well as local college campuses.

If you have more information about the identity of the protesters, please email rwatkins@thegavoice.com.

Atlanta Braves game to benefit Georgia Equality

The Atlanta Braves will host a Sept. 13 game to benefit Georgia Equality, the state's largest LGBT advocacy organization, in what is being called "Out in the Stands."

Georgia Equality and members from PFLAG (Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) met with Atlanta Braves President John Schuerholz after pitching coach Roger McDowell was accused of using anti-gay slurs toward fans in San Francisco over Easter weekend earlier this year.

McDowell allegedly shouted, "Are you a homo couple or a threesome?" at fans and imitated a sex act using a baseball bat. He was eventually suspended and publicly apologized for the incident.

Georgia Equality Executive Director Jeff Graham said that he believes "Out in the Stands" is the first step the Atlanta Braves will take in repairing the damage caused by McDowell's comments.

"We certainly have continued to be in conversations with the Braves organization," Graham told GA Voice. "I've encouraged them to get behind local efforts to address bullying in public schools and to support organizations that do that work. I don't believe the Braves are done with their initiatives around that. I certainly that hope we continue to see more out of them."

A portion of the Sept. 13 ticket sales will benefit Georgia Equality, the organization said. Tickets must be purchased through Dennette Thorton (404-614-1493 or dennette.thornton@braves.com) by Sept. 9.

— Ryan Watkins

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

'Out in the Stands'
Atlanta Braves vs. Florida Marlins
Tuesday, Sept. 13, 7:10 p.m.
Turner Field
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Atlanta, GA 30315
www.AtlantaBraves.com

GOP presidential hopefuls debate same-sex marriage

There's no denying the economy is the main focus of politicians contending to be the next president of the United States. Last week's GOP debate on Fox News focused largely on the subject, but other topics, like foreign policy and social issues, were also discussed.

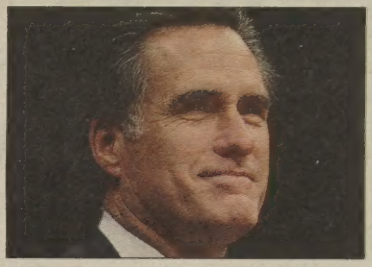
There were a handful of questions directed to candidates about same-sex marriage during the Aug. 11 debate, and there weren't any surprises in the answers given to the moderators.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney fielded the first question on marriage when he was asked if he believed state lawmakers have the right to legalize same-sex unions as recently happened in New York.

"I'd far prefer having the representatives of people make that decision than justices, but I believe the issue of marriage should be at the federal level," Romney said.

Romney added that he supports a constitutional amendment that would "define marriage as a union between a man and a woman."

Former governor of Utah and Ambassador to China John Huntsman, who supports civil unions for same-sex couples, was asked if his position was too moderate for GOP primary voters.



Mitt Romney (Creative Commons photo by Jessica Rinaldi/Mitt Romney Media)

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF
GA VOICE

"I believe in traditional marriage, first and foremost," Huntsman said.

"But, I also believe in civil unions because I think this nation can do a better job when it comes to equality. I think this national can do a better job when it comes to reciprocal beneficiary rights. That's just my personal belief. Everyone is entitled to their personal belief, too."

One of the moderators asked Libertarian-leaning Rep. Ron Paul (Texas), who has said he supports the states' rights in the marriage debate, if he would support states that wanted to legalize polygamy. Paul scoffed and said it would be like a state reenacting slavery.

"I want the states to deal with it if they have to, if they need to," Paul said of the marriage debate. "I would say less government would be better. If you have to have regulations, let the state governments do it."

Rep. Michele Bachmann (Minn.), the winner of the Ames Straw Poll last weekend, told voters that she hasn't budged on the marriage debate.

"I support the federal marriage amendment because I believe that we will see this issue at the Supreme Court one day," she said. "I have an unblemished record when it comes to this issue."

Fred Karger, a political consultant running on the GOP ticket, was noticeably absent from the debate. Karger, who is gay, has since filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission over his exclusion, according to political news source The Daily Caller.

— Ryan Watkins

'Gay Icon' Ann Coulter joins GOProud's advisory board

GOProud, a conservative LGBT political organization, announced Aug. 9 that it had named columnist Ann Coulter to its advisory board. Coulter has a long history of anti-gay statements and does not support marriage equality.

"Ann Coulter is a brilliant and fearless leader of the conservative movement, we are honored to have her as part of GOProud's leadership," said Christopher Barron, chairman of GOProud's board, in a statement released on GOProud's website.

"Ann helped put our organization on the map. Politics is full of the meek, the compromising and the apologists – Ann, like GOProud, is the exact opposite of all of those things. We need more Ann Coulters," Barron added.

Coulter's official title is "Gay Icon."

"I am honored to serve in this capacity on GOProud's Advisory Council, and look forward to being the Queen of Fabulous," said Coulter via GOProud.

Coulter made waves in conservative circles last year when she headlined GOProud's inaugural Homocon event. Conservative "news" outlet World Net Daily dropped Coulter from its list of contributors and questioned her conservative principles over her appearance at the conference. Coulter responded, saying that World Net Daily editor Joseph Farah was simply stirring up controversy to get hits to his website.

— Ryan Watkins

Anne Coulter (photo via Facebook)

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VOICES OPINION & REACTION

Basketball and bi-phobia

Reactions to Sheryl Swoopes' return to dating men reveal more about us than the WNBA star

Guest editorial by Rev. Irene Monroe

To some in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities, Sheryl Swoopes is a "lie-sexual."

Swoopes — the three-time Olympic gold medalist and three-time MVP of the Women's National Basketball Association — is just another sister-girl on the "down low" announcing the incredulous news that she's now engaged to marry a man.

To incurable homophobes, especially of the fundamentalist Christian variety who pedal their rhetoric that homosexuality is curable with reparative theories, Swoopes is the prodigal daughter who has finally found her way away from homosexuality and home to Jesus.

To many of my heterosexual African -merican brothers, Chris Unclesho, the man Swoopes is engaged to marry, is the man! A bona fide "dyke whisperer" who has turned Swoopes out to the sexual joys of what it is to be with a man.

Swoopes, of course, made headlines in 2005 when she announced her relationship with a woman. So Swoopes' news last month that she is engaged to a man sends seismic shock waves to those of us fighting the de-medicalization and de-stigmatization of queer sexualities.

Those cheering Swoopes' news of straight marriage believe it proves that folks like Republican presidential hopeful Michele Bachmann are right, that our ongoing struggle for LGBTQ civil rights is nothing more than a politicized hedonistic gay agenda to upend traditional family values.

Take this typical comment from an ESPN.com blogger:

"Sheryl is just more proof that no one is born gay, it is a learned behavior brought on by experiences and circumstances in one's life."

My head spins at the thought of how Christian "de-gaying" counseling services, like that of Dr. Marcus Bachmann, Michelle Bachmann's spouse, could politicize Swoopes' seemingly sexual flip-flopping as their poster-child.

Gay, straight – or bi?

In 1997, a pregnant Sheryl Swoopes was the heterosexual face for the WNBA. She was the cover-girl for the premiere issue of "Sports Illustrated Women." At the time Swoopes was married to her male high school sweetheart.

In 2005, Swoopes came out about her relationship with a woman, becoming the second out lesbian in the WNBA. She endorsed the lesbian travel company "Olivia." Swoopes was partnered with Alisa Scott, an assistant coach for the Houston Comets (Sheryl played for them from 1997 – 2007).

And now, in 2011, she's with a male.

While some of her Facebook followers may suspect Swoopes has indeed found Jesus in a Bible-thumping homophobic church, Swoopes has neither renounced homosexuality nor retracted her 2005 "coming out" statements about being a lesbian.

"There is nothing I've been through in my life that I regret, or that I would go back and change. I feel like everything that happened — personally and professionally — I went through for a reason, and I learned from those things," Swoopes just recently told ESPN.com reporter Mechelle Voepel.

What lies at the center of various reactions to Swoopes' announcement is not her seemingly duplicitous sexual flip-flopping, but rather our ignorance and phobia about bisexuality that complicates our (straight and LGTQ folks') understanding of the scope of heterosexism.

Lollygagging on the phone with a friend, who is lesbian, talking about Swoopes, she said, "Well, I kinda could see how a sister might be bisexual, but there's no such thing as a bisexual brother. Girlfriend, he's really on the 'down-low.'"

Bisexuals are an underrepresented, if not invisible, group. Most (again, straight and LGTQ folk) can only conceive of a gay/straight binary paradigm. Bisexual women are between a rock and a hard place within gay and straight circles.

Within bi-phobic lesbian circles, the place of bisexual women within the queer women's community is, sadly, still marginal, if it exists at all. Some lesbians believe that any woman who has the ability to sexually love another women also has a political obligation to identify as lesbian.

Others believe that the compulsory nature of heterosexuality in our culture precludes all possibilities of women freely choosing a heterosexual relationship.

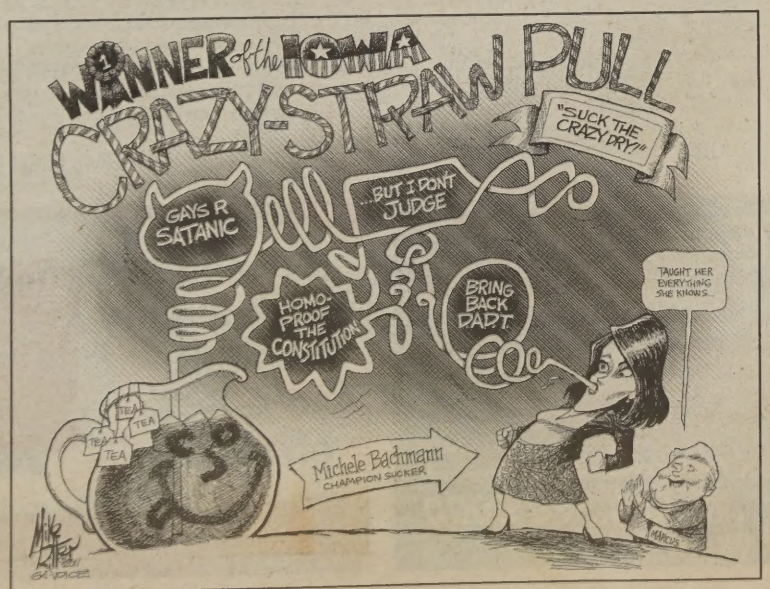
And within homophobic straight circles, the place of bisexual women is a push toward them as devout heterosexual Christians.

Who Swoopes is partnered with or married to is really none of our business.

But this fact is for sure:

If you are in the straight camp cheering Swoopes for "crossing back over" or in the queer camp castigating her for "flip-flopping," you share a bi-phobic reaction to Swoopes' choice of spouse.

Rev. Irene Monroe is coordinator of the African-American Roundtable of the Center for Lesbian & Gay Studies in Religion & Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion. She can be reached at www.irenemonroe.com



SPEAKING OUT

Should Ernie and Bert get married, or should gay folks leave them alone?

Re: "Change.org petition aims to out Bert and Ernie" (thegavoice.com, Aug. 10)

Yes, they already live together. Might as well!

There is a time to push the envelope and then time to leave some things alone. I personally think this is one of times it should be left alone. Choose your battles wisely.

Leave the damn Muppets alone. Everything in the entire world is not gay. Straight people do still exist. That's just stupid. This type of extremist behavior is the crap that prevents us from having equal rights. Get real! Leave PBS alone.

How is it that "getting married" equals being out? How about they just wear "Silence = Death" t-shirts instead?

Have you seen the inside of their apartment? How about those eyebrows?! No gay man I know would live in such a drab environment with an unkempt physical appearance. I'm willing to bet they are just roommates.

This was amusing until more than one person on my friends list posted a Change.org petition with the comment headline, "Stop Homophobia on Sesame Street." It turned into insanity for me at that point. People do need to wake up, wise up and choose real battles. They are puppets not humans!

GOProud crazy to call Ann Coulter a 'gay icon'

Re: "'Gay Icon' Ann Coulter joins GOProud's advisory board" (thegavoice.com, Aug. 9)

I have personally never understood GOProud or Log Cabin Republicans. People voting their purse and not their rights is beyond me.

We are talking about Ann Coulter, who is not an "ally" but more like an "Alli," like the diet pill with the side effects. Ann Coulter is the side effect of taking an "Alli" pill.

This is insanity. Did you see her interview were she claims that she talked GOProud out of gay marriage? Self-deprecating pushovers will never transform the GOP and make it more inclusive.

Ernie and Bert. (Publicity photo)

Editor's note: These comments on Georgia Voice articles were submitted via our website and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thegavoice). Want to weigh in? Follow us there or submit comments on our website.

Hillary Clinton vs. Barack Obama: Should they face off in Democratic Primary?

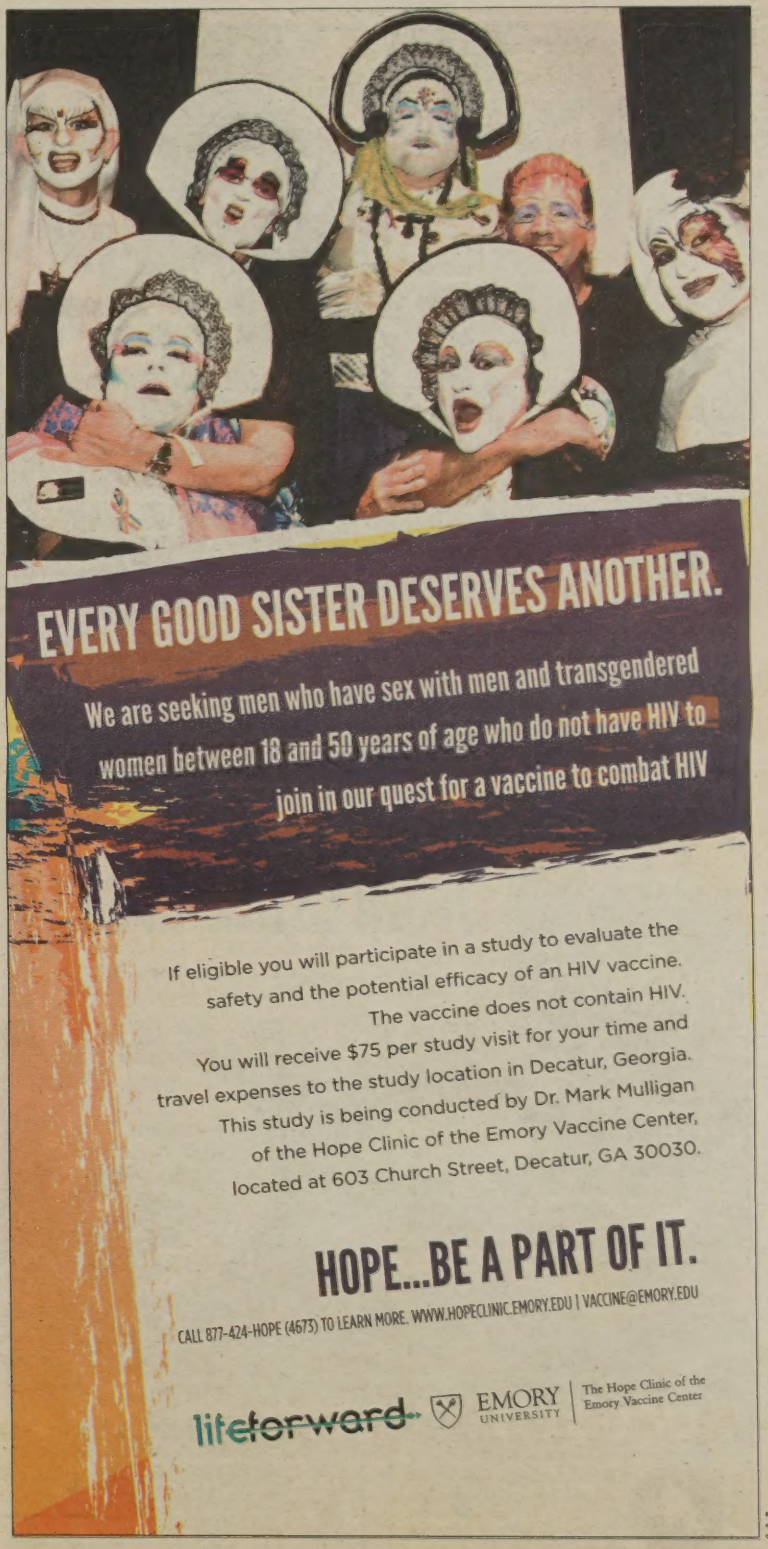
Re: "If Clinton challenged Obama for the 2012 nomination, who would you vote for? And would this help or hurt the Democrats, who are definitely better on LGBT issues than the leading GOP candidates?" (discussion at www.facebook.com/thegavoice, Aug. 8)

I would vote for her and, no, it would not hurt Democrats.

I wish she was the current president. I think she would be totally out of her mind to get involved in the 2012 election. It's going to be one of the messiest ones that we've ever had.

It would totally hurt Democrats. Look what Kennedy challenging Carter did. The grass is always sunnier on the other side of the street, but there is no way to know that she would have been any better than Obama, especially since it was under her husband we got DADT and DOMA.

Primary challenge between Hillary and Obama + Tea Bagger insanity = President Bachmann.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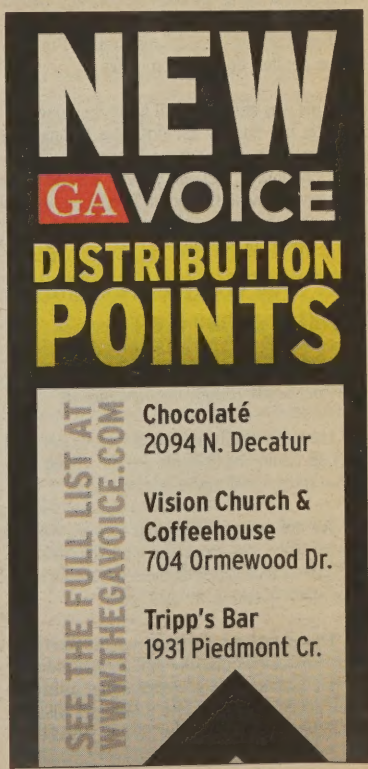
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A&E by Sage Nenyue

Black Gay Pride celebrates past, looks to the future

In the Life Atlanta marks 15 years of community empowerment

Organizers of Atlanta's Black Gay Pride events gathered Aug. 15 for a press conference to show their unity and discuss plans for this year's festivities. (Photo by Shaun Jones / Finesse, LLC)

Labor Day weekend brings tens of thousands to Atlanta for what is billed as the world's largest Black Gay Pride. This year's festivities will have added impact, as the nonprofit In the Life Atlanta celebrates 15 years of bringing cultural and educational events to the massive celebration.

In the Life Atlanta formed in 1996 to create a community component to Black Gay Pride, which began as an informal network of house parties, nightlife and other gatherings. This year, ITLA's packed schedule of events focuses on the theme "A Crystal Ball" to mark the organization's crystal anniversary.

"The overarching theme for our anniversary this year is 'In the present, learning from the past to shape the future.' We chose the crystal ball because it's been 15 years; 15 is the crystal year," explained ITLA President Raymond Duke.

"As for the ball, rather than say, a crystal goblet or the crystal itself, when you gaze into it, you can see what's going on now and what's happened in the past to get us to where we are now. And then it will also take you into the future to see what's up ahead," Duke said of the highly symbolic theme.

Duke's remarks came Aug. 15 at the History of Black Gay Atlanta Press Conference at the Meliá Hotel. Presented by Meak Productions in partnership with The Tenth Amendment Media Group and Xtreme Entertainment, the press conference gave a sneak peek of the events to occur during Black Gay Pride.

The conference included representatives from In The Life Atlanta, the State of Black Gay America Summit, Traxx, Traxx Girls, and other club and event promoters, who promised that this year's Black Gay Pride will continue to deliver quality entertainment and education.

In th Life Atlanta: 'Calling upon our ancestors'

While Black Gay Pride began before In the Life Atlanta formed, the nonprofit brought important changes to the festivities, said Miko Evans, executive producer/CEO of Meak Productions.

"When there was no ITLA, I remember people just went out and partied with no cohesion [on Labor Day weekend]," Evans said. "Now all the major players have gotten together this year to celebrate ourselves."

ITLA wants to entertain and educate through a variety of offerings that range from a health expo, workshops and a youth track to a fashion show, film festival and literary café.

"We are an organization that, for the past 15 years, has worked diligently to educate our community, to provide cultural services to our community, to look at the nuances of our population of men and women who are of African descent who could be transgendered—people who identify or don't fit into certain sub-populations," Duke said.

"We have historically done this and do this today, calling upon our ancestors on whose shoulders we stand to continue to support us, protect us, and sustain us to be able to do this for decades to come," he continued.

Duke also discussed his vision for Black Gay Pride.

"We are a proud people, we matter, we make a difference, our dollar is very powerful and we are a force to be reckoned with. My vision for Black Gay Pride is that we continue to exist, to be proud," he said.

He disagreed with those who say that they long for a day when there is no longer a need for a Black Gay Pride, countering "that's like living for the day when there is no Fourth of July celebration or Martin Luther King day.

"People are still celebrating Civil Rights victories just as we should be celebrating the fact that we can be black and gay," Duke said.

ITLA is also excited to be able to clear up the public misconception that it is somehow at odds with the Atlanta Pride Committee, which hosts the Atlanta Pride festival Oct. 8-9.

"The Atlanta Pride Committee is 40 years old — it's an adult with a driver's license and a mortgage. ITLA is just turning 15; we are barely getting our permit," Duke said. "There is so much we can learn from the APC."

State of Black Gay America: 'Revitalizing our commitment'

The State of Black Gay America Summit, held each year on the Saturday of Black Gay Pride, celebrates its fifth anniversary in 2011.

The SBGA Summit was conceived by Darlene Hudson, an educational specialist advocate, and co-produced with Gregory Allen, the president and CEO of Xtreme Entertainment, Inc. Both attended the Aug. 15 press conference to discuss the event.

Hudson spoke of her vision of the summit working to help and nourish communities.

Allen discussed the importance of cohesion within the black LGBT community.

"People have to show up and show out; the only way to move ahead is to move together," he said. "Black Gay Pride is everyone's, so it's our responsibility to see it through.

Earl Fowlkes, the president/CEO of the International Federation of Black Gay Prides, was announced as the keynote speaker.

"He's a catalyst and resource for putting together Black Gay Prides all around the world," Hudson said.

The theme of this year's summit is "Revitalizing Our Commitment to Leadership, Diversity, and Community."

One panel, "Revitalizing Our Commitment to Leadership and Community," calls for setting the agenda for progress for the black LGBT community.

"We can't be stagnant. In 10 years, Pride should look completely different; it should be better," Hudson said.

Allen agreed.

"Atlanta sets the tone for the rest of the black gay world. This is the black gay mecca. When Atlanta does something, people watch. We set trends," he said.

And as for the future of the Summit, Hudson acknowledged that organizers have big dreams: "We want to nationalize it. It isn't called 'The State of Black Gay Atlanta or Georgia.' We want our model to be used across the nation. But first we have to get it right here," she said.

In the Life Atlanta

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www.inthelifeatl.com

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Atlanta, GA 30308

Wednesday, Aug. 31
- Candlelight Vigil @ First MCC of Atlanta, 7-10 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 1
- Bag Stuffing Party, 6-10 p.m.
- VIP Reception/Gala Crystal Ball 6:30 - 10 p.m.
- Marriages By Judge Jacque' 7 - 9 p.m.
- Black Pride Literary Kick-Off Party @ Charis Books & More, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 2
- Black Pride Marketplace, 10 a.m. - 11:59 p.m.
- Youth Track, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Marriages By Judge Jacque', 7 - 9 p.m.
- 2011 Opening Ceremony, 8-10 p.m.
- Pretty In Pink Party For A Cause @ Club 595, 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.
- SpeakFire, 11:59 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Saturday, Sept. 3
- Workshops, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Black Pride Marketplace, 10 a.m. - 10 pm.
- Health Expo & Life Expo, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Trans-I-Matter Mini Conference, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Literary Cafe', 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- State of Black Gay America Summit, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Marriages By Judge Jacque', 2- 6 p.m.
- See Us In The Life Film Festival, 4- 10 p.m.
- White Party hosted by Cee Jay Jones 9 p.m. - 3 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 4
- Workshops, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Black Pride Marketplace , 10 a.m. - 4 pm.
- Jazz Brunch, 12- 3 p.m.
- See Us In The Life Film Festival, 2:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Interfaith Service @ Saint Mark United Methodist Church, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- Fashion Show, 9 p.m. - 3 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 5
- Black Pride Marketplace, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

State of Black Gay America Summit

Saturday, Sept. 4, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Melia Hotel
www.sbgasummit.org
- Luncheon and keynote speaker Earl Folkes, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., $35
- Panel discussions, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m., free

State of Young Gay America

Wednesday, Aug. 31, 7 p.m.
Melia Hotel

ROCKSTARS PRODUCTION
PRESENTS

Labor Day
ROCK

ATLANTA BLACK PRIDE WEEKEND
09.01.11 - 09-06.11

THURSDAY
OFFICIAL WEEKEND JUMP OFF PARTY - "SEXY MEN UNITE"
10PM - 4AM
XS LOUNGE - 708 SPRING ST NW ATLANTA, 30309

FRIDAY
KENK KOCKTAIL MIXER - FEATURING KENK CANDY
4PM - 9PM
ENGINE 11 - 30 NORTH AVE NE ATLANTA, 30308

OFFICIAL PRIDE WELCOME RECEPTION
9PM - 10PM
HOST HOTEL - THE MELIA - 590 W. PEACHTREE NW ATLANTA 30308

SEXY IN THE CITY DANCE PARTY - "ROCK THE VOTE"
10PM - 3AM
CLUB LIFE - 1789 CHESHIRE BRIDGE RD NE ATLANTA 30324

THE AFTER PARTY - "PARTY LIKE A ROCKSTAR"
3:30AM - UNTIL
XS ULTRA LOUNGE - 708 SPRING ST ATLANTA GA

SATURDAY
"SOAKING WET POOL PARTY"
4PM - 10PM
HOST HOTEL - THE MELIA

THE MAIN EVENT - "FINE BROTHERS ROCK"
10PM - 6AM
TRAXX - 1287 COLUMBIA DRIVE DECATUR 30034

SUNDAY
"ROCK THE VOTE RED CARPET RESULTS"
ANNOUNCING THE 2012 FACE OF ROCKSTAR
4PM - 9PM
PRIMAL - 960 SPRING ST NW ATLANTA 30309

THE MAIN EVENT - "IT'S IN THE STARS"
10PM - 5AM
CLUB EUROPE - 4001 PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY ATLANTA GA 30340

MONDAY
THE PRIVATE EVENT - FEATURING 2012 FACE OF ROCKSTAR
4PM - 9M
UNDISCLOSED LOCATION

ANNUAL WHITE PARTY
10PM - 3AM
HAVANA CLUB
3112 PIEDMONT ROAD, ATLANTA 30305

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EVENTS by Dyana Bagby

Nightlife heats up for Atlanta Black Gay Pride

Promoters still finalizing schedules but promise great parties for Labor Day weekend

Packed with educational and informative events such as the State of Black Gay America Summit, Black Gay Pride is more than just a weekend-long party. But there is no doubt that partying is a major aspect of celebrating Pride for the estimated 100,000 people who come from all over the world to descend on Atlanta over Labor Day weekend.

This year's parties should be as hot as ever, but which celebrities will perform remains unclear as promoters continue to finalize their nightlife schedules.

"It's going to be a full weekend and we're still putting on some final touches. It's been a real struggle with artists this year but they are slowly trickling in," says Phillip Boone, owner of Traxx Atlanta.

*Above: R&B singer **Marsha Ambrosius**, once one-half of the popular British duo Floetry, performs on Sunday, Sept. 4, at the Traxx party at Mansion Elan night club in Decatur. (Publicity photo)*

*Left: At last year's Black Gay Pride, Traxx hosted thousands for a performance by hip-hop diva **Nicki Minaj**. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)*

Known for huge parties, including last year's performance by Nicki Minaj, Traxx and Traxx Girls promise another national artist to perform during Black Gay Pride. The entertainer will perform at two events on Saturday, Sept. 3, as part of the group's "Pure Heat" Pride weekend: the huge Traxx party at Traxx Club on Columbia Drive, and the Traxx Girls party held each year at the downtown Freight Depot.

Boone did give a few hints about who they expect to perform: "She used to have her own TV show and she sings and she was on 'Dancing with the Stars' recently.

"That should give you enough clues," he added with a laugh.

There will also be time to remember and honor Traxx Atlanta's Durand Robinson, who was shot and killed shortly before last year's annual Black Pride weekend, Boone said.

Traxx and Traxx Girls are also bringing in R&B singer Marsha Ambrosius. She was once one-half of the popular British duo Floetry and is also a well-known songwriter pursuing a solo career. She is set to perform on Sunday, Sept. 4, at the Mansion Elan night club in Decatur.

"She is one of our main performers this year. We had been told no from her for months, but she decided to cut her vacation short and come perform on Sunday," said Melissa Scott, owner of Traxx Girls.

Ambrosius' new album, "Late Nights & Early Mornings," includes the song "Far Away," written after a close friend attempted suicide. The video for the song confronts anti-gay prejudice and bullying and how it can lead to suicide.

"Her video is very conscious and speaks to suicides and after all we heard about them last year [by teens who were gay or perceived gay], it's so relevant to what is happening today. She is one of the first celebrities to do a video taking on this subject," Scott said.

Pride: 'Highlight of our accomplishments

Opal Harris, events coordinator for Girls in the Night, said the group is planning its popular parties at Compound while also hosting a burlesque show and its White Party at Park Tavern on Sunday, Sept. 4.

"[Black Gay Pride] shows our pride in our community," she said. "It's an emotional time for me. I'm proud to be LGBT, not only as a woman but also as a mother. Our community has come through so much but we stick together and work hard to accomplish things."

Also promising a weekend full of parties and events is Rockstars Productions which will seek the "Face of Rockstar" to be its spokesperson for the next year. Contestants will meet and greet at a pool party at the Melia, the host hotel for Black Gay Pride this year, on Saturday, Sept. 3, and the new spokesperson will be introduced on Sunday, Sept. 4, at a "Rock the Vote Red Carpet Results Party" at Primal.

"I see Pride as a highlight of our accomplishments," said JuJu Rock of Rockstar. "For many people, there is a mask of shame they wear and this is an opportunity for all of us to come together so we don't have to wear that mask.

"We also don't believe Black Pride should be contained to only black people. Our goal and focus is to have a universal presence," he said.

All of the hotels are already packed with people coming in from around the world for one of the largest Black Gay Prides in the U.S. But economic times are tough and Boone, of Traxx Atlanta, said he and his friends are trying to ensure people can have a great time without breaking their wallets.

"We want to make the weekend as economically feasible as we can for everyone," Boone said. "People have complained in the past that everything is so overpriced. So one way we're trying to help is to have a $10 buffet brunch at XS Ultra Lounge so people can take a break from overpriced hotel food."

Collaborations are important, too, as Traxx and Traxx Atlanta team up with Rockstars Production, Lions Den and In the Life Atlanta to host events to bring unity to participants looking to have a great time in the city. The groups co-host their popular White Party on Monday, Sept. 5, at Havana Club.

Traxx and Traxx Girls also take advantage of the popularity of Piedmont Park on the Sunday of Black Gay Pride to have a DJ and pass out free water to everyone.

"We're going to have a hospitality suite set up for everyone in the park and have a dockside DJ set up," said Scott.

Labor Day Weekend Black Gay Pride parties

There is still time to purchase passes to the packed schedule of events and parties over Black Gay Pride weekend hosted by these nightlife promoters. Be sure to check out our full calendar of events, with the details of their extensive offerings, at **www.thegavoice.com**

Traxx Atlanta and Traxx Girls
"Pure Heat"
www.atlantaprideweekend.com

Rockstars Production
"Labor Day Rock"
www.rockstarsproduction.com

Girls in the Night
"Femme-Nomennon XVI"
www.girlsinthenight.com

Xplosion Entertainment
"Peach Fever"
www.xplosionentevents.com

Wassup N ATL
"Manual Labor"
www.wassupnatl.com

Lion's Den
"Southern Explosion Atlanta"
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MUSIC by Shannon Hames

Breaking barriers through music

A conversation with legendary Janis Ian

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

Janis Ian
With Tony Arata, Craig Carothers and Gretchen Peters
Thursday and Friday, Sept. 1-2, 8 p.m.
Eddie's Attic
515 N McDonough St., Decatur, GA 30030
www.eddiesattic.com

Janis Ian, the Grammy award-winning musician, singer and songwriter, began her career challenging stereotypes, gaining both fame and controversy for songs that took on racism (1967's "Society's Child") and sexism (1975's "At Seventeen").

Ian, who came out as a lesbian 15 years ago, performs at Eddie's Attic in Decatur for two shows Sept. 1-2. She spoke with GA Voice about the different format for the shows, her nonprofit foundation and life as a lesbian.

Tell us about your upcoming shows at Eddie's Attic. It's a different format than when you played Eddie's last year.

Janis Ian: Yes! This is the first time I've taken this "in the round" show outside of the Bluebird Café in Nashville. We've been doing it there for four years as a steady gig. It's for love, not money, because once you take that door and split it four ways, after expenses, there's just beer money left. …

I'm trying to see whether this format will work in other places (outside of Nashville) and whether audiences will "get it" in other places. Gretchen Peters, who wrote "Independence Day" for Martina McBride and Tony Arata, who wrote "The Dance" for Garth Brooks — we are all performers and you will see four song-writers trying to top each other by playing dozens of songs.

To honor your mom, you created "The Pearl Foundation." Tell me about that.

My mom went back to school in her 40s and she was fortunate that I could fund it. After she died, I wanted to find a way to honor her. We formed the foundation in her honor. This year, we'll hit the half-million mark which, for a tiny foundation like ours, is pretty amazing. Especially given that the only people who work for it are me and my partner and we don't get paid.

*As a musician, **Janis Ian** has challenged taboos throughout her career, from confronting sexism and racism to coming out as a lesbian. (Photo by Peter Cunningham)*

When you came out 15 years ago, did your career take a hit?

I'm sure that it did but you do what you gotta do.

It seems like it doesn't really matter anymore, right?

I don't know that it matters as much as it did. It matters in certain areas. Certainly in the Christian music area, we have yet to see a black well-known artist come out. We have yet to see a gospel artist come out. There are a lot of black and gospel artists who are gay. When they come out, that will change things a lot.

I'm beginning to think that it's generational. The people that I know under 30 are like, "Ho-hum. Who cares?" But the people who really get upset are the old guard who, I hate to put this bluntly, are eventually dying off.

What compelled you to come out?

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force threw some statistics at me about teenage suicide. At the time, 3 out of every 10 teenage suicides were because they thought they might be gay. Not even that they were gay – that they might be gay.

I waited until my "Breaking Silence" album came out to maximize the publicity. There was a group of us right then that came out: me, Melissa Ethridge and k.d. lang. That's what it takes — people being brave enough to come out when they're in the public or not.

It's just as important for people who are not in the public to come out to their families and friends, a lot of whom say that they've never met one before. It's easy to fear what you don't know.

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INDICATION: REYATAZ® (atazanavir sulfate) is a prescription medicine used in combination with other medicines to treat people 6 years of age and older who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). REYATAZ has been studied in a 48-week trial in patients who have taken anti-HIV medicines and a 96-week trial in patients who have never taken anti-HIV medicines.

REYATAZ does not cure HIV or lower your chance of passing HIV to others. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not take REYATAZ if you are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.

Do not take REYATAZ if you are taking the following medicines due to potential for serious, life-threatening side effects or death: Versed® (midazolam) when taken by mouth, Halcion® (triazolam), ergot medicines (dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, Methergine®, and others), Propulsid® (cisapride), or Orap® (pimozide).

Do not take REYATAZ with the following medicines due to potential for serious side effects: Camptosar® (irinotecan), Crixivan® (indinavir), Mevacor® (lovastatin), Zocor® (simvastatin), Uroxatral® (alfuzosin), or Revatio® (sildenafil).

Do not take REYATAZ with the following medicines as they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood, which may lead to increased HIV viral load and resistance to REYATAZ or other anti-HIV medicines: rifampin (also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®), St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)-containing products, or Viramune® (nevirapine).

Serevent Diskus® (salmeterol) and Advair® (salmeterol with fluticasone) are **not recommended with REYATAZ.**

Do not take Vfend® (voriconazole) if you are taking REYATAZ and Norvir® (ritonavir).

The above lists of medicines are not complete. **Taking REYATAZ with some other medicines may require your therapy to be monitored more closely or may require a change in dose or dose schedule of REYATAZ or the other medicine.** Discuss with your healthcare provider all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamin and herbal supplements, or other health preparations you are taking or plan to take.

Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. REYATAZ use during pregnancy has not been associated with an increase in birth defects. Pregnant women have experienced serious side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. **After your baby is born,** tell your healthcare provider if your baby's skin or the white part of his/her eyes turns yellow. **You should not breast-feed** if you are HIV-positive.

Also tell your healthcare provider if you have end-stage kidney disease managed with hemodialysis or **severe liver dysfunction.**

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effects, symptoms, or conditions, including the following:

- **Mild rash** (redness and itching) without other symptoms sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started, and usually goes away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (cont'd):

- **Severe rash** may develop with other symptoms that could be serious and potentially cause death. **If you develop a rash with any of the following symptoms, stop using REYATAZ and call your healthcare provider right away:**
  - Shortness of breath
  - General ill-feeling or "flu-like" symptoms
  - Fever
  - Muscle or joint aches
  - Conjunctivitis (red or inflamed eyes, like "pink eye")
  - Blisters
  - Mouth sores
  - Swelling of your face
- **Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes** may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).
- **A change in the way your heart beats** may occur. You may feel dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- **Diabetes and high blood sugar** may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
- **If you have liver disease,** including hepatitis B or C, it may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- **Kidney stones** have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ. Signs or symptoms of kidney stones include pain in your side, blood in your urine, and pain when you urinate.
- **Some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ.
- **Changes in body fat** have been seen in some patients taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term effects are not known at this time.
- **Immune reconstitution syndrome** has been seen in some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS) and a history of opportunistic infection. Signs and symptoms of inflammation from previous infections may occur soon after starting anti-HIV treatment, including REYATAZ.
- **Gallbladder disorders** (including gallstones and gallbladder inflammation) have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

You should take **REYATAZ once daily with food** (a meal or snack). Swallow the capsules whole; **do not open the capsules. You should take REYATAZ and your other anti-HIV medicines exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.**

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

REYATAZ is one of several treatment options your doctor may consider.

Please see Important Patient Information about REYATAZ on the adjacent pages.

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Do not take REYATAZ if you are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.
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* Undetectable was defined as a viral load of less than 400 copies/mL.
† Wolters Kluwer. SDI Product Brand Report. Total Patient Tracker; November 2010.

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Patient Information

REYATAZ® (RAY-ah-taz)
(generic name = **atazanavir sulfate**)
Capsules

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate). Read the section "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?"

Read the Patient Information that comes with REYATAZ before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet provides a summary about REYATAZ and does not include everything there is to know about your medicine. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is REYATAZ?

REYATAZ is a prescription medicine used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people 6 years of age and older who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). REYATAZ is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a protease inhibitor. HIV infection destroys CD4+ (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of (T) cells are destroyed, AIDS develops. REYATAZ helps to block HIV protease, an enzyme that is needed for the HIV virus to multiply. REYATAZ may lower the amount of HIV in your blood, help your body keep its supply of CD4+ (T) cells, and reduce the risk of death and illness associated with HIV.

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

REYATAZ does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections. **It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking REYATAZ.**

REYATAZ does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

Who should not take REYATAZ?

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

- **are taking certain medicines.** (See "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?") Serious life-threatening side effects or death may happen. Before you take REYATAZ, tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you are taking or planning to take. These include other prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- **are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.** The active ingredient is atazanavir sulfate. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in REYATAZ. Tell your healthcare provider if you think you have had an allergic reaction to any of these ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take REYATAZ?

Tell your healthcare provider:

- **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** REYATAZ use during pregnancy has not been associated with an increase in birth defects. Pregnant women have experienced serious side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if REYATAZ is right for you. If you use REYATAZ while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
  - **After your baby is born,** tell your healthcare provider if your baby's skin or the white part of his/her eyes turns yellow.
- **If you are breast-feeding.** You should not breast-feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Also, it is not known if REYATAZ can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- **If you have liver problems or are infected with the hepatitis B or C virus.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have end stage kidney disease** managed with hemodialysis.
- **If you have diabetes.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have hemophilia.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"

- **About all the medicines you take** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your healthcare provider. For more information, see "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?" and "Who should not take REYATAZ?" Some medicines can cause serious side effects if taken with REYATAZ.

How should I take REYATAZ?

- **Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you.
- **Always take REYATAZ with food** (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. **Do not open the capsules.** Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
- **If you are taking antacids or didanosine (VIDEX® or VIDEX® EC),** take REYATAZ 2 hours before or 1 hour after these medicines.
- **If you are taking medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), ZANTAC® (ranitidine), AcipHex® (rabeprazole), NEXIUM® (esomeprazole), PREVACID® (lansoprazole), PRILOSEC® (omeprazole), or PROTONIX® (pantoprazole),** talk to your healthcare provider.
- **Do not change your dose or stop taking REYATAZ without first talking with your healthcare provider.** It is important to stay under a healthcare provider's care while taking REYATAZ.
- **When your supply of REYATAZ starts to run low,** get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is important not to run out of REYATAZ. The amount of HIV in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time.
- **If you miss a dose of REYATAZ,** take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If, however, it is within 6 hours of your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of REYATAZ or your other anti-HIV medicines.**
- **If you take more than the prescribed dose of REYATAZ,** call your healthcare provider or poison control center right away.

What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?

The following list of side effects is **not** complete. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

The following side effects have been reported with REYATAZ:

- **mild rash** (redness and itching) without other symptoms sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started. Rashes usually go away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if rash occurs.
- **severe rash:** Rash may develop in association with other symptoms which could be serious and potentially cause death.

  If you develop a rash with any of the following symptoms stop using REYATAZ and call your healthcare provider right away:
  - shortness of breath
  - general ill feeling or "flu-like" symptoms
  - fever
  - muscle or joint aches
  - conjunctivitis (red or inflamed eyes, like "pink eye")
  - blisters
  - mouth sores
  - swelling of your face
- **yellowing of the skin or eyes.** These effects may be due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver). Although these effects may not be damaging to your liver, skin, or eyes, call your healthcare provider promptly if your skin or the white part of your eyes turn yellow.
- **a change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change).** Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- **diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia)** sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
- **If you have liver disease** including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- **kidney stones** have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ. If you develop signs or symptoms of kidney stones (pain in your side, blood in your urine, pain when you urinate) tell your healthcare provider promptly.

- **some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.
- **changes in body fat.** These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- **immune reconstitution syndrome.** In some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS) and a history of opportunistic infection, signs and symptoms of inflammation from previous infections may occur soon after anti-HIV treatment, including REYATAZ, is started.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

Gallbladder disorders (which may include gallstones and gallbladder inflammation) have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?

Do not take REYATAZ if you take the following medicines (not all brands may be listed; tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take). REYATAZ may cause serious, life-threatening side effects or death when used with these medicines.

- Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHERGINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- ORAP® (pimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- PROPULSID® (cisapride, used for certain stomach problems).
- Triazolam, also known as HALCION® (used for insomnia).
- Midazolam, also known as VERSED® (used for sedation), when taken by mouth.

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because of possible serious side effects:

- CAMPTOSAR® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- CRIXIVAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIXIVAN sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin).
- UROXATRAL® (alfuzosin, used to treat benign enlargement of the prostate).
- REVATIO® (sildenafil, used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood. This may lead to an increased HIV viral load. Resistance to REYATAZ or cross-resistance to other HIV medicines may develop:

- Rifampin (also known as RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®, RIFATER®, or RIFAMATE®, used for tuberculosis).
- St. John's wort *(Hypericum perforatum)*, an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort.
- VIRAMUNE® (nevirapine, used for HIV infection).

The following medicines are not recommended with REYATAZ:

- SEREVENT DISKUS® (salmeterol) and ADVAIR® (salmeterol with fluticasone), used to treat asthma, emphysema/chronic obstructive pulmonary disease also known as COPD.

Do not take the following medicine if you are taking REYATAZ and NORVIR® together:

- VFEND® (voriconazole).

The following medicines may require your healthcare provider to monitor your therapy more closely (for some medicines a change in the dose or dose schedule may be needed):

- CIALIS® (tadalafil), LEVITRA® (vardenafil), or VIAGRA® (sildenafil), used to treat erectile dysfunction. REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA. Do not use CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA while you are taking REYATAZ unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
- ADCIRCA® (tadalafil) or TRACLEER® (bosentan), used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension.
- LIPITOR® (atorvastatin) or CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
- Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: CORDARONE® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as CARDIOQUIN®, QUINIDEX®, and others).
- MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin, an antibiotic used to treat tuberculosis).

REYATAZ® (atazanavir sulfate)

- BUPRENEX®, SUBUTEX®, SUBOXONE®, (buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone, used to treat pain and addiction to narcotic painkillers).
- VASCOR® (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COUMADIN® (warfarin).
- Tricyclic antidepressants such as ELAVIL® (amitriptyline), NORPRAMIN® (desipramine), SINEQUAN® (doxepin), SURMONTIL® (trimipramine), TOFRANIL® (imipramine), or VIVACTIL® (protriptyline).
- Medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection: SANDIMMUNE® or NEORAL® (cyclosporin), RAPAMUNE® (sirolimus), or PROGRAF® (tacrolimus).
- The antidepressant trazodone (DESYREL® and others).
- Fluticasone propionate (FLONASE®, FLOVENT®), given by nose or inhaled to treat allergic symptoms or asthma. Your doctor may choose not to keep you on fluticasone, especially if you are also taking NORVIR®.
- Colchicine (COLCRYS®), used to prevent or treat gout or treat familial Mediterranean fever.

The following medicines may require a change in the dose or dose schedule of either REYATAZ or the other medicine:

- INVIRASE® (saquinavir).
- NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- SUSTIVA® (efavirenz).
- Antacids or buffered medicines.
- VIDEX® (didanosine).
- VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate).
- MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin).
- Calcium channel blockers such as CARDIZEM® or TIAZAC® (diltiazem), COVERA-HS® or ISOPTIN SR® (verapamil) and others.
- BIAXIN® (clarithromycin).
- Medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (ranitidine).

Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing an effective method of contraception. REYATAZ may affect the safety and effectiveness of hormonal contraceptives such as birth control pills or the contraceptive patch. Hormonal contraceptives do not prevent the spread of HIV to others.

Remember:

1. **Know all the medicines you take.**
2. **Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.**
3. **Do not start a new medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.**

How should I store REYATAZ?

- Store REYATAZ Capsules at room temperature, 59° to 86° F (15° to 30° C). Do **not** store this medicine in a damp place such as a bathroom medicine cabinet or near the kitchen sink.
- Keep your medicine in a tightly closed container.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children and pets at all times. Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Dispose of unused medicines through community take-back disposal programs when available or place REYATAZ in an unrecognizable, closed container in the household trash.

General information about REYATAZ

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use REYATAZ for another condition. Do not give REYATAZ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. **Keep REYATAZ and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.**

This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-321-1335.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?

Active ingredient: atazanavir sulfate

Inactive ingredients: Crospovidone, lactose monohydrate (milk sugar), magnesium stearate, gelatin, FD&C Blue #2, and titanium dioxide.

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THEATER by Jim Farmer

The voice of 'Dralion'

Cirque show features openly gay lead singer

Those accustomed to the usual look and feel of a Cirque du Soleil production might be surprised by the company's "Dralion." It returns next week to Atlanta,with an openly gay lead vocalist in Cristian Zabala.

According to Zabala, "Dralion" differs greatly from other Cirque productions, in more ways than simply not being under a traditional tent. It is Cirque's 12th traveling show and perhaps its most divisive. The show focuses on a Chinese circus/acrobatics element. Zabala promises lots of colors – which are used to represent the elements of the earth – and notes, "this is what Cirque does best – combine styles."

Zabala has been with the company for nine years and has performed in a variety of Cirque's signature shows. His first was "Alegria." However, he much prefers singing than the gymnastics and acrobatics he has done in the past, since it is easier on his body and requires less rehearsal.

In "Dralion," Zabala is the lead vocalist in the large cast of singers and performers, all from around the world.

Born in Argentina, he has found a home as an openly gay man in the company. He himself came out at an early age and views himself fortunate in that aspect.

"Everyone was accepting — I was very gay when I was a kid. It was very obvious," he laughs.

He is now 37 and has spent the last 17 years in musicals/theater, including "Cats," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Chicago."

He vividly recalls performing in Atlanta before with Cirque and says it is one of the cities that warms up the most to them.

Unlike previous Cirque shows that have run for months, this one plays both in downtown Atlanta and then Gwinnett, with both runs for four days only.

Fall's 'Spring Awakening'

Actor's Express is opening its season with a dandy – the musical "Spring Awakening." It's directed by openly gay Freddie Ashley, the company's artistic director. He had not seen the musical until it passed through the Fox Theatre on a national tour last year. He had, however, been listening to the soundtrack for a while.

"Spring Awakening" is a rock musical adapted from the noted play of 1891 by Frank Wedekind, controversial over its themes of rape, abortion, homosexuality and more. It takes place in Germany in the late-19th century where a group of teenagers are discovering sexuality, including two gay characters, Hanschen and Ernst.

It won eight 2007 Tony Awards including Best Musical and starred Jonathan Groff and Lea Michele of "Glee" fame on Broadway.

The celebrated music is by Duncan Sheik.

"This show has some of the some most exciting music written for the stage in years," Ashley says. "They took a 100-year-old play and exploded it into something contemporary. It's very much an exploration of human sexuality."

While it's a show known for its strong plot, characters and music, Ashley says there is also a message.

"It's about the dangers of repressing sexuality – what happens when parents don't talk to their kids," he says

In terms of scope, it's one of the bigger shows Ashley has done – and his first rock musical since "Hedwig and the Angry Inch."

Actor's Express recently ended a fundraising campaign and reached about 80 percent of its goal, which has stabilized it, says Ashley.

Christian Zabala has performed in several Cirque shows and is the lead voice of "Dralion."

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

"Dralion"
- Aug. 25 - 28 at Philips Arena
1 Philips Drive NW, Atlanta, GA 30303
- Sept. 1 - 4 at The Arena at Gwinnett Center
6400 Sugarloaf Parkway Ste. 100
Duluth, GA 30097
www.cirquedusoleil.com/dralion

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FIERCE DISHES by Rob Andrews and Bo Shell

Perfect 10s for Double Zero

Creative Italian fare combines with welcoming service

Sadly homophobia still exists even in the liberal service industry. We recently approached a notable restaurant about hosting our LGBT professional networking group and they refused.

We then anonymously asked if they would host a "straight" retirement party — same date, size and price point — and they accepted. Why would you not want to host a group of professional LGBTs who are bar friendly?

But luckily, that wasn't the case at Double Zero Napoletana on Roswell Road. Their response to hosting the Atlanta Executive Network and Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce last month was not chilly and elusive but extremely excited.

The event was a complete success. They provided light appetizers which you can order when you go. The base was their artisanal hearth-baked ciabatta bread – crusty on the outside with a soft, airy, almost sourdough interior. When you order the pizza you will enjoy the same hearth-baked bread.

How is the food? This is elevated Italian and Double Zero is sublime perfection in every way. We sampled crab stuffed sautéed calamari, vegetarian pasta tossed with a sherry mushroom cream and rich polenta baked in a cast iron skillet.

Double Zero also offers simple tomato basil and fresh mozzarella pizza which we paired with a fresh watermelon salad tossed with many other ingredients including carrots, turnips, candied pistachio nuts and porcini "dirt." We split both and had a stellar meal for under $20.

Paglia e Fieno is just one of the creative Italian dishes on the menu at Double Zero Napoletana. (Publicity photo)

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

Double Zero Napoletana
5825 Roswell Road
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
www.doublezeroatl.com

Also noteworthy were seared scallops accompanied by a fennel and orange salad and my new favorite Lobster Pappardelle pasta — wide ribbons of scratch made pasta tossed with luxurious butter poached Main lobster, fresh corn, basil and a lobster wine sauce.

Double Z serves up a perfect juxtaposition between "down home" Southern Italian and chef-driven sophistication.

— Rob Andrews

5 Napkin's 'butcher shop chic'

Located at the very gay corner of 10th Street and Piedmont Avenue, 5 Napkin Burger opened for dinner service on Monday, Aug. 15, and will add lunch and brunch services soon.

The extensive renovation of what was Nickiemoto's has resulted in what 5 Napkin calls "butcher shop chic." While some of the location's old sushi regulars might recognize elements of the floor plan, the space is truly revamped and felt very cosmopolitan. According to the company, the restaurant will seat 100 inside and 40 outside.

Despite the heavy crowd for the preview dinner we attended, our reservation was filled promptly after a brief stop at the bar. Limited to specialty drinks and draft beer on opening night, we tried the frozen strawberry mojito, thyme lemonade and spicy watermelon drinks. Each was unique with fresh ingredients.

Looking over the appetizer menu, the three of us were quick to find several items that suited our tastes: hot spinach and artichoke dip with endives and french bread crostini, cornmeal crusted onion rings and a combo platter of sushi. Of the three apps, we'd recommend the dip as our favorite.

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

5 Napkin Burger
990 Piedmont Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30309
www.5napkinburger.com/midtown-atlanta

Each of the three of us ordered burgers: one "Original 5 Napkin Burger," a bacon and cheddar burger and, for a twist, an ahi tuna burger. Prices ranged from $13.95 to $15.95.

The beef was rich and the toppings well-seasoned. The best of the three by far was the bacon and cheddar burger. Gourmet flavor? Absolutely. Best burger ever? We'll let you decide.

We also tried three desserts — the cheesecake, the expresso brownie sundae and the chocolate milkshake — with the cheesecake rating at the top of our list.

— Bo Shell

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BOOKS by Laura Douglas-Brown

Lessons from the table

'Spoon Fed' details lesbian writer's hunger for meaning in food and life

Kim Severson opens up about much more than cooking in the memoir 'Spoon Fed.' (Publicity photo)

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

Kim Severson reads 'Spoon Fed'
Thursday, Aug. 25, 7:30 pm.
Charis Books & More
1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307
www.chariscircle.org

Kim Severson set out to simply write about female cookbook authors. But the result was her memoir "Spoon Fed: How Eight Cooks Changed My Life," the compelling tale of how lessons learned at the table helped her cope with alcohol addiction, drug use, coming out, and more.

Released in April 2010, "Spoon Fed" drew instant praise for Severson, who has worked as a journalist and food writer for newspapers in Alaska and California, and finally for the New York Times.

In November, Severson became the Atlanta bureau chief for the New York Times, and now lives in Decatur with her partner and their daughter. She reads from "Spoon Fed" Aug. 25 at Atlanta's feminist bookstore, Charis Books & More.

When you set out to write "Spoon Fed," did you intend for it be a memoir?

Kim Severson: I didn't. It was intended as a profile of some of the great woman cookbook authors who changed how we eat. These are women like Marion Cunningham, who got famous before the Food Network exploded and everyone started cooking like it was a competition.

You write very honestly about your struggles with alcoholism and other issues. After so many years as a journalist covering other people's stories and problems, what was it like revealing your own?

It was really grueling, being one's own source material. But once I started, I realized I had to tell the truth and just go for it or the story wouldn't be any good. But there was a moment, when I saw it al together for the first time, that I thought, "What the hell have I done?" I told another author who said I just had to put on my big girl panties and stand behind my story. That helped.

How has "Spoon Fed" been received so far?

It's really been something. I have heard from a number of people in recovery, from people whose mothers had recently died, from gay folks and, of course, from cooks.

How does Atlanta compare to other places you have lived, including Alaska, California and New York? Any Southern stereotype that turned out to be true (or not true)?

Well, I have learned that not every barbecue place is a good one. And on the bright side, I have learned that the south can rival California when it comes to the care and cooking of vegetables. As a whole, though, the restaurants in Atlanta aren't on par with New York. But who could expect them to be. That being said, I have had some great meals here.

You live here with your partner and daughter. How have you found the city to be as a home for two moms raising a child?

It's great. We live in Decatur so being a two-mommy family is nothing new or different. We have had nothing but the most gracious welcome. And a wonderful thing is that Atlanta offers so much space for a kid to run and play.

As a food critic and writer, do people expect you to also be an excellent cook yourself?

I do feel a little pressure when people come to dinner or I have to take food to a potluck. But I like to cook, and I am happy to feed people, so that helps with the cook's anxiety. I've found that if you prepare something you love and pay some attention to it, people are happy to eat it.

Some people also assume food critics to have very sophisticated dining tastes. What is one of your favorite foods that might surprise people with its simplicity? Would we find Easy Cheese and Fritos in your pantry?

Well, I do like Fritos now and then. And good pork rinds. And the occasional bag of peanut M&Ms. I am not opposed to Sonic tater tots, either.

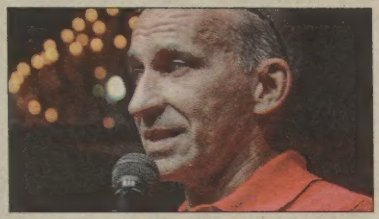
What is next for you as a writer?

I'm working on a cookbook with my good pal Julia Moskin, a food writer for the times and my unofficial work wife. We do a series of competitive meals. I, of course, win every one. (Not).

PHOTOS by Brent Rence Corcoran/RNZ Photography

Atlanta Cotillion Burlesque Cabaret

The 2011 Atlanta Cotilion fundraising season continued with the group's Aug. 14 Burleque Cabaret event at Opera. Every summer, Cotillion rasies money for AID Atlanta through a class of male debutantes who host charitable events for the city's largest HIV/AIDS nonprofit.



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Pride at Six Flags

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Out on Film is Atlanta's own LGBT film festival. We're in our 24th season. Out on Film was created in 1987 to inform, entertain, educate and enrich the regional LGBT community by recognizing the creative work of LGBT artists and professionals.

When is the event?
September 29 – October 6, 2011

What films will be shown?
Out on Film selects a variety of films for our LGBT audiences, including comedies, dramas, romances and documentaries. In addition, we screen multi-racial and multi-cultural films.

Where is the event?
The majority of films are shown at the Landmark Midtown Art Cinema, 931 Monroe Drive, Atlanta GA 30308. Additional screenings will be held at other local venues.

How do I buy tickets?
Tickets can be purchased at www.outonfilm.org, the Landmark theater, and online at the Landmark's website. Please visit www.outonfilm.org for more ticket information.

Are there other activities?
Yes. Out on Film schedules opening and closing night parties plus events before and after select films, including Q&As with filmmakers.

How can I learn more?
www.outonfilm.org has complete details about films and schedules, including trailers, special events, and volunteering.

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Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce honors community leaders

*By **Matt Schafer***

The Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce will take time to honor the creator of one of Atlanta's iconic gay landmarks, Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse, at its annual Community Awards Dinner on Aug. 26.

The AGLCC Awards will also celebrate other business leaders who help their companies not only survive, or turn a profit, but go out of their way to help the community. Chamber Vice President Geoff Bieger said the awards, given in six categories, focus on those who use their positions productively.

"I think historically businesses haven't taken the active role in the community that I think they should. So, I think it's important to take one night a year to sit back and recognize the work that we're doing," Bieger said.

Bieger said the chamber also wants to recognize businesses and organizations that advance LGBT causes. That's why the AGLCC has nominated big Atlanta companies like Coca-Cola, Ernst & Young, Home Depot, SunTrust and UPS for the Corporate Ally Award. The chamber also recognizes non-profits and activists, and members have nominated Actor's Express, Atlanta Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, East Point Possums, Out On Film and attorney Dan Grossman for the Guardian Angel award.

This year's awards dinner has undergone a number of changes. Bieger said it is still a great place to network, but this year there won't be a celebrity guest, or presenter, as in the past.

"It is a community awards dinner, so the programming focuses around that," Bieger said. "The attendees are the full spectrum of our membership; so we'll have everyone there from small businesses, individuals and some of the larger companies will have a full table."

While winners in other categories won't be announced until the ceremony, the chamber will present its Lifetime Achievement Award to Philip Rafshoon, the owner and founder of Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse, the independent bookstore that ties down the corner of 10th and Piedmont, often considered the heart of gay Atlanta.

***Philip Rafshoon**, owner of Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse (above), will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2011 Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Awards. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)*

"When you think of this award, you look into the community, and you ask who are the leaders in our community? Not so much during one specific year, but over time. I think the recognition with Philip is that yes, he is a small business owner, but he's involved in our community in so many ways," Bieger said.

Rafshoon has won almost every award the gay community has to offer for his efforts in building Outwrite, but said the chamber's recognition is different.

"It's really special, because this is being recognized by people at my own level who run their own businesses, who understand the hoops we jump through," Rafshoon said. "Running a business like this takes hours and hours and hours every day. I was talking with somebody last night. He was starting up his business and working 16 hours a day, and with a business like this that never changes.

"It's always reinventing, it's always changing… running a business is tough and I appreciate the awards," Rafshoon said. "I appreciate it on behalf of our staff; we have a great team who put in a lot of hours, and a lot of hard work."

Outwrite has become both the unofficial living room of the LGBT community, and often one of the first stops on someone's coming out journey. Rafshoon was almost at a loss for words when asked how many people his store has touched in its soon to be 18 years in business.

"Oh my god," he said, followed by a large pause. "I'd say over a half million people, if not more. I think we've changed a lot of people's lives. We've changed the community for the better. Every day we help someone find something here that helps change their lives.

"Just the other day we had a woman in here whose son was gay, but not out yet. Her husband was anti-gay and we were able to help her find some books that would help her."

Tickets to the event start at $110 with VIP tickets available for $150, which includes an open bar.

MORE INFO www.theGAVoice.com

AGLCC Community Awards Dinner
Friday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m.
W Midtown
188 14th Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30361
Tickets: $110 general, $150 VIP
www.atlantagaychamber.org

AGLCC Community Awards nominees

Business Woman of the Year
Liz Covin: Vivid Salon
Laura Douglas-Brown: GA Voice
Jo Giraudo: Insider Traveler
Pam Ridgway & Kelly Spurgeon: Advantage Graphics
Barb Rowland: Common Ground Real Estate of Keller Williams

Business Man of the Year
Tim Boyd: GA Voice
Tyler Calkins & William Dufee-Braun: Fenuxe Magazine
Austin Cohen: Cohen Chiropractic Centre
David Olt: Integrated Chiropractic Center
Thomas Ryan: Carma Productions

Corporate Ally
The Coca-Cola Company
Ernst & Young
The Home Depot
SunTrust
UPS

Member of the Year
John Benthal: The Mission Motif
Frank Bragg: Radial Cafe
Dax Dossman: Adam's Apples
GA International Convention Center
Kardon Technology

Guardian Angel
Actor's Express
Atlanta Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence
East Point Possums
Dan Grossman
Out On Film

Lifetime Achievement Recipient
Philip Rafshoon: Outwrite Books

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NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

CHRIS Kids helps LGBT youth find home, support

Moving to a new home is a milestone for any family. For CHRIS Kids, a nonprofit Atlanta agency that provides housing and support to LGBT and other young people, it's particularly momentous.

Georgia First Lady Sandra Deal will be on hand Aug. 30 as CHRIS Kids celebrates the grand opening of the CHRIS Counseling Center, Education Center and Summit Trail Apartment Community.

The move unites CHRIS Kids' administration and other programs with its program to help young adults who were homeless or aging out of foster care that has already moved into the Summit Trail apartments. It also puts the CHRIS Kids administration closer to the agency's eight group homes for younger children.

"It's a huge deal because a place that represents home, family, stability and safety for kids needs a permanent home," says CHRIS Kids CEO Kathy Colbenson. "A home needs a home."

LGBT young people are a target population for CHRIS Kids, and are represented throughout the agency's programs. The state frequently sends gay and transgender youth to CHRIS Kids, where the staff — which includes several openly gay employees — receives specific training on LGBT issues, Colbenson says.

MORE INFO

CHRIS Kids
2045 Graham Circle
Atlanta, GA 30316
www.chriskids.org

"We have had gay kids in all of our programs all along because there are a lot of gay kids in the foster care system that weren't safe, and because we are a place that really demands respect in terms of how people treat each other," she says.

Colbenson estimates that about 20 percent of young people in CHRIS Kids' programs self identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The agency used to run a specific Rainbow Project, but last year combined it into the TransitionZ program, which helps youth ages 17-24 prepare to be self-sufficient, successful adults.

The 44 young adults who live in CHRIS Kids' apartment homes receive not only housing, but individual assessments, counseling and other services to help them make the transition to living independently. All are required to work to prepare them to be on their own. The agency has also included a gay-straight alliance program, with a new session to start in late fall.

CHRIS Kids' new home is located near Interstate 20 and allows the nonprofit to have a permanent base. (Photo courtesy CHRIS Kids)

LGBT donors are crucial to the success of CHRIS Kids, especially because the agency sometimes misses out on other sources of support because of its unapologetic policy of inclusion, Colbenson says.

"Frankly, we don't get some other donors because of our stand, but we don't deny who we are and how we serve people, so our LGBT donors and supporters are critically important," she says.

— Laura Douglas-Brown

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Trilogy offers unique books from a unique family

Trilogy, which opened in October in the Atlanta suburb of Avondale Estates, is more than just a New Age bookstore. The serene, creative space also perfectly reflects the unique family that owns it.

Sean and Havilah Tonkin were married for 10 years and had two children together. But then Sean met Valentin, and the two men have now been married for three years.

When Sean and Valentin Tonkin decided to pursue their dream of opening a business, Havilah and her son moved to Georgia from Ohio to join them. The three parents now own the bookstore together, and live together with their three kids.

Hence the store's name: Trilogy.

"The three of us, along with our three children, worked tirelessly to turn the dream into a reality," says Sean Tonkin. "Combining each of our unique talents and experience, we have created a store as eclectic as we are. It is truly a 'family' business, in every sense of the word."

The Tonkins were thrilled to open the store in the quaint downtown of Avondale Estates.

MORE INFO

Trilogy Bookstore
126 N. Avondale Road
Avondale Estates, GA 30002
www.trilogybookstore.com

"It is a small town nestled in amongst the city and is full of very accepting people. It has a large gay and gay friendly population as well," Tonkin says.

Trilogy focuses on "products and services to improve your mind, body and spirit," he says.

"We have books on everything from astrology, to personal growth, to Buddhism, to paganism, shamanism, alternative healing and medicine, etc. We also offer Yoga, Massage Therapy, Reiki, Tarot and Astrology classes," Tonkin says.

Trilogy's owners also believe in giving back to the community, including the local LGBT community. They offer space in the store for non-profit groups, and Sean and Valentin Tonkin now serve on the board for Just Cause, Inc., the parent group for East Side Pride and Generation[Q], a new group for LGBT youth and their allies to gather for discussion and support.

***Sean Tonkin** (left) and **Valentin Tonkin** (right), two of Trilogy Bookstore's owners, with **Lorrie Lynn King**, leader of East Side Pride, which meets at the store. (Photo via Facebook)*

"Our daughter is 14 and a member of G[Q]. She has told us that it is the first place that she has felt so totally accepted and can be herself without being judged," Tonkin says.

"Even though she is a straight ally, growing up with gay dads, in the past, has caused her some issues with people, and this has allowed her to truly be herself and enjoy hanging out with like-minded individuals," he says.

— Laura Douglas-Brown

PERSONALITY SPOTLIGHT

Melvin Arundelli: why 'anyone can be a gay bird'

By Dyana Bagby

*Four years ago, **Melvin Arundelli** was in a serious motorcycle accident and is now on disability. A fundraiser to help with his expenses is set for Aug. 28 at My Sisters' Room. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)*

Melvin Arundelli, 34, was born in Italy but has lived in Atlanta since he was just over a year old. Four years ago this month, he crashed his motorcycle into a telephone pole, and suffered severe traumatic brain injury. He was hospitalized at Grady for five months and in a coma for most of that time.

Arundelli now uses a wheelchair, has limited movement in his left arm, is legally blind and can't smell or taste. But he's alive, he says, and his sense of humor remains firmly intact.

"Meet Boosheka," he says, inviting friends to sit on the comfy cushion on his wheelchair.

"She's my girlfriend. The best thing I got when I left Grady," he adds with a laugh.

Arundelli, who is a transgender man, performed as a drag king under the name Pee Wee Hymen for a decade before the accident and remains a trans activist.

Now on disability with mounting healthcare costs, he may lose his home. The Feminist Outlawz are putting on a fundraiser for Arundelli on Aug. 28 at My Sisters' Room.

MORE INFO

Fundraiser for Melvin/Pee Wee Hymen
Sunday, Aug. 28
Spaghetti dinner and silent auction from 5-7:30 p.m.
Variety show starts promptly at 8 p.m.
$20 for dinner and show; $10 for show only
More info: http://on.fb.me/nuiNG8

Tell us about what happened on Aug. 23, 2007.

I was driving a Yamaha 150 — it belonged to Veronica [aka The Lady Miss Vagina Jenkins] — because my truck had been stolen. I crashed into a telephone pole. I don't remember what happened.

They had to cut into my skull to relieve leaking I had in my brain and when they did that they cut through my optic nerve and sinus cavity. When I came out of the coma I was just ready to get out of the hospital.

Why does your hat say "Gay Bird"?

When I was in the first grade I heard people talking about someone being a "gayfer." I thought they were saying "gay bird." I would go around saying someone was a gay bird and one day my friend asked me what I was saying. When I told her, she explained, "No, it's gayfer."

It was just a childhood misunderstanding but I always thought it was funny. I figured I'm happy, I can be a bird. Anyone can be a gay bird. I'm hoping to make "gay bird" T-shirts for the fundraiser.

I was also in Girl Scouts and one day they were talking about Elton John being a "gayfer." I came up and said of course he was. They were like, "Well, how do you know?" And I said he sings about his boyfriend in that song.

The Girl Scout leader was drinking her coffee and looked at me and said, well, why don't you sing this song for us. So I sang, "Hold me closer, Tony Danza!" She spewed her coffee out laughing. She then explained to me it was "Tiny Dancer." She was probably gay. …

Then when I wanted to start dating girls my friends wanted to take me to "My Sister's Womb." I was like, I don't think I want to be gay. I thought that was a weird name. Then they explained to me it was My Sisters' Room.

Where did Pee Wee Hymen come from?

[A friend] said, "You are going to be Pee Wee Hymen!" I loved it. I had no idea what my drag name was going to be. And then when I created the Pee Wee Herman suit to wear, everybody loved it.

I've always liked art. I used to do photography. I draw with magic markers now, just silly stuff like my cat taking a poop.

What are you looking forward to at the fundraiser?

I'm hoping to raise some money to help with my mortgage so I can keep my house. I bought the house when I was 24. I was a woodworker, I liked building things. I worked 60 hours a week. I was a hard worker.

Anything raised will help. It will also be great to see people I haven't seen in a long time.

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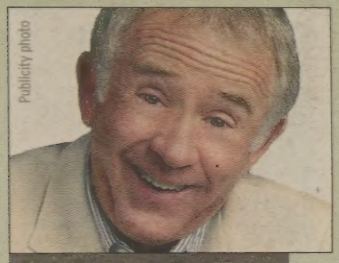
SPOTLIGHT


Publicity photo

Thursday, Aug. 18 - Friday, Aug. 19

Favorite gay funnyman **Leslie Jordan** brings his one-man show to Atlanta. 9:30 p.m. both nights at Mixx Atlanta, 1492 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.mixxatlanta.com

Photo via Facebook

Saturday, Aug. 20

Pandora Boxx from "RuPaul's Drag Race" helps Atlanta drag icon **Mary Edith Pitts** celebrate her, ahem, 21st Birthday – at least in drag years – and raise funds for Jerusalem House. 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. DJ Micky Friedman then spins at Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Rd., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.jungleclubatlanta.com

Friday, Aug. 19

Join the **Human Rights Campaign's Atlanta** members for a **Meet & Greet** with the owner and several players from the **Atlanta Dream**, the city's WNBA team, then see them take on the Connecticut Suns. Use code "HRC" to buy $15 tickets. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Philips Arena, 1 Philips Drive, Atlanta, GA 30303. After party follows at Bellissima, 560 Amsterdam Ave., Atlanta, GA 30306. atlanta.hrc.org

LGBT Dance Atlanta and **DJ Charles** bring back the **Wild Mustang** every Friday night at **Jungle**. Doors open at 7 p.m., free dance lesson at 8 p.m. at Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Rd., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.jungleclubatlanta.com

"Here Comedy Presents Kate Clinton," featuring the popular lesbian comic, screens at the Third Friday Film Series. Suggested donation $1-$10 sliding scale. Films start at 7:30 p.m. at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park Dr., NE, Atlanta, GA 30307

DJ Vicki Powell spins for Boombox. 11 p.m. at The Sound Table, 483 Edgewood Ave SE, Atlanta, GA 30312

Drag Race 2 continues every first and third Friday. Any king or queen can enter; the 10 weekly winners will progress to the finale. The fun starts at 10 p.m. at My Sister's Room, 1271 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316, www.mysistersroom.com

Kitty LeClaw's Meow Mix gets catty at 11 p.m. at Blake's on the Park, 227 10th St NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com.

Saturday, Aug. 20

Drench, the W Downtown's weekly summer Saturday pool party, gets wet from 1-7 p.m. at the W Atlanta Downtown, 45 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30313, www.chriscolemanenterprises.com

Gay poet **Collin Kelley** reads from **"Slow to Burn,"** his newly re-released chapbook, as well as several new pieces. 3-4 p.m. at Bound To Be Read Books, 481-B Flat Shoals Ave. SE, Atlanta, GA 30316, collinkelley.blogspot.com

Publicity photo

Saturday, Aug. 27

DJ Ralphi Rosario spins at the Heretic, 2069 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.hereticatlanta.com

MORE LGBT EVENTS: Visit our website for our extensive daily calendar, including nightlife schedules, sports, worship services and community organization meetings. **www.thegavoice.com/calendar**

Enjoy a DVD signing of **"Finding Me"** with Director **Roger Ormeus** and cast members **Ray Martell Moore, Eugene Turner** and **Miste Roule**. 5-6 p.m. at Outwrite, 991 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.outwritebooks.com

Cool off from the summer heat with the gay **Atlanta Team Tennis Association**. Enjoy food, music and drinks poolside. 6:30 p.m. at Glenlake Pool, 1121 Church St, Decatur, GA 30030, www.atta.org

If you missed gay actor and comedian **Leslie Jordan** in his Thursday and Friday night shows at Atlanta's Mixx, catch him in a benefit for Savannah Pride. 8 p.m. at Club One, 1 Jefferson St., Savannah, GA 31401, www.clubone-online.com

The **Armorettes** perform from 8-10 p.m. followed by **3 Legged Cowboy night** at the Heretic. 2069 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.hereticatlanta.com

Have fun with karaoke and beer while helping **East Side Pride** raise money for the group's Atlanta Pride float. 9 p.m. at The Spot Bar & Grill, 4578 Britt Road, Tucker, GA 30084. Search "East Side Pride" on Facebook.

Jealouse's Daring Divas perform at 11 p.m. at Blake's on the Park, 227 10th St NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com.

Shavonna B. Brooks hosts the **Extravaganza** drag show at 11:30 p.m at Burkhart's, 893 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.burkharts.com

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Chase Daniels, Jami Siden and **Liz Ellis** host the hot, huge party as My Sister's Room celebrates its 15th anniversary. Special performances and **DJ E spins.** 10 p.m. at My Sister's Room, 1271 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316, www.mysistersroom.com

The gay **Atlanta Bucks Rugby Club** hosts its monthly bar night at the Atlanta Eagle, 306 Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.atlantaeagle.com

The **Man 2 Man** party heats up every Saturday night at XS Ultra Lounge, 708 Spring St., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.xsultralounge.com

Saturday, Aug. 20-Sunday, Aug. 21

The **Piedmont Park Summer Arts & Crafts Festival** focuses on visual art and family fun, plus acoustic music and food. Saturday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Piedmont Park, www.piedmontparkartsfestival.com

Sunday, Aug. 21

Brent Star and **DJ Christopher Kind** keep Sundays hot starting at 2 p.m. at Cowtippers, 1600 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.metrocafes.com/Cowtippers

PFLAG Atlanta hosts a panel discussion on **"Opening the Trans Closet,"** featuring transgender people and their parents, for the group's monthly Third Sunday meeting. 2:45 - 5 p.m. at First MCC, 1379 Tullie Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30329-2308, www.pflagatl.org

MixHer Sundays celebrate the ladies. 6 p.m. to midnight at Bellissima, 560 Amsterdam Ave., Atlanta, GA 30306, www.facebook.com/bellissima.atlanta

The **Armorettes**, the infamous camp drag troupe, performs at 7 p.m. at Burkhart's, 893 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.burkharts.com

Russ C debuts at 3 a.m. at Xion, 2241 Faulkner Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.xionatlanta.com

Monday, Aug. 22

Join **Bubba D. Licious** and the rest of the drag ladies at **Dragamundo**. Every Monday from 8 - 11 p.m. at Las Margaritas, 1842 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324 www.lasmargaritasmidtown.com

Thursday, Sept. 1

Thursdays are now **3 Legged Cowboy night** at the Heretic, with country music and line-dancing like the former gay country bar. Dance lessons 8-9 p.m. at 2069 Cheshire Bridge Road, Atlanta, GA 30324, www.hereticatlanta.com

Mondays are **Drag on the Edge** at 11 p.m. at Blake's on the Park, 227 10th St NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com.

"Sordid Lives" screens for Movies at Dusk at 8:30 p.m. at Joe's on Juniper, 1049 Juniper St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.metrocafes.com/joes-juniper/Home.aspx

Tuesday, Aug. 23

Lesbian social networking group **Fourth Tuesday** hosts its monthly dinner. Drinks at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. at Carpe Diem, 105 Sycamore Place, Decatur, GA 30030

The **MISTER Project of Positive Impact** hosts yoga with teacher **Kyle Knapp**; the event is free and participants are invited to come early for free HIV testing. 6-7:30 p.m. at the MISTER Community Center, 139 Ralph McGill Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30308, www.positiveimpact-atl.org

AID Atlanta's Gay Outreach hosts **Coffee Talk**, a low-key alternative to their events at local bars. 6-8 p.m. at Starbucks, 2333 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30305. Contact steven.igarashi@aidatlanta.org

Wednesday, Aug. 24

Join **Positive Impact's MISTER Project** for the **MISTER book club**; tonight's gathering will discuss **"The Swimming Pool Library,"** up to chapter 10. 7-8 p.m. at the MISTER Community Center, 139 Ralph McGill Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30308, www.positiveimpact-atl.org

Joy Edwards presents **"Family Law for the LGBT Community,"** focusing on adoptions. 7:30 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.chariscircle.org

For the month of August, **Birdcage Bingo** hosted by **Ruby Redd** benefits the Armorettes, the drag troupe that raises money for HIV. 8 - 10 p.m. at Mellow Mushroom, 931 Monroe Drive, Atlanta, GA 30308

The **Beauty & the Bitch Drag Comedy Show** features Bubba D. Licious and Charlie Brown. 9:30 p.m. at Cowtippers, 1600 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.metrocafes.com/Cowtippers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

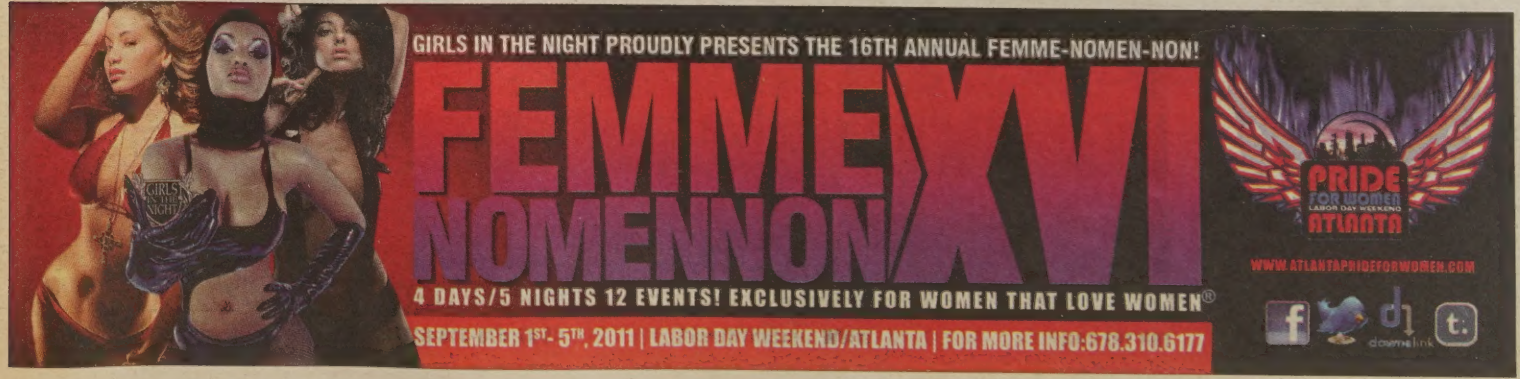
SPOTLIGHT

Sunday, Aug. 21

Enjoy **DJ Diablo Rojo** and hot furry guys at the **ManSplash Roof Top Pool Party**, courtesy of the ManShaft party organizers. 2-6 p.m. at the Sol Deck at the Melia Hotel, 590 West Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.facebook.com/groups/themanshaft

Thursday, Aug. 25

Donna Hopkins, Diane Durrett (pictured) and **Caroline Aiken** perform for Women in Rock in the Round. 8 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515 N McDonough St., Decatur, GA 30030, www.eddiesattic.com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EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

Thursday, Aug. 25

Lesbian journalist and award-winning food writer **Kim Severson** reads from her memoir, **"Spoon Fed: How Eight Cooks Saved My Life."** 7:30 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.chariscircle.org

LGBT Dance Atlanta hosts **Throwdown Thursdays**, with line dance lessons at 8 p.m. followed by open dance to country hits all night at Bellissima, 560 Amsterdam Ave., Atlanta, GA 30306, www.facebook.com/bellissima.atlanta, www.lgbtdanceatlanta.com

Chris Coleman's Indulge party is Thursday nights from 9 p.m. to midnight at W Hotel - Midtown, 188 14th Street, Atlanta, GA 30361, www.chriscolemanenterprises.com

Madame Lahore's Manhot features hot guys from all walks of life competing, but you'll be the winner. **Cherry Pop** follows. 10 p.m. at Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Rd., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.jungleclubatlanta.com

Monte St. James presents the **Purple Dragon** every Thursday night. Talent show at 10 p.m., main show at 11:15 p.m. at XS Ultra Lounge, 708 Spring St., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.xsultralounge.com.

Friday, Aug. 26

The **Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce** hosts its annual Community Awards Dinner. 7 p.m. at the W Atlanta Midtown, 188 14th St. NE, Atlanta, GA, 30361, www.atlantagaychamber.org

Artist **Tania Calderón** features her most recent collection of fine art nudes entitled **"A Season of Bliss"** with a solo exhibit from 7-10 p.m. at Mattress Factory Lofts, 300 MLK Jr. Drive, Atlanta, GA 30312, www.calderonfoto.com

Ladies Lounge is every Friday at XS Ultra Lounge, 708 Spring St., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.xsultralounge.com

Saturday, Aug. 27

MEGA Family Project presents **"Maybe Baby,"** a discussion of options for LGBT people to become parents. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at the Rush Center, 1530 Dekalb Avenue, Suite A, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.megafamilyproject.org

Wet, a pool party in Savannah, raises funds to benefit Georgia Equality and the First City Network volunteer fund. Features DJ Bette White. 6-9 p.m. at Miss Billie's 55 Amanda Dr., Savannah, GA 31406, http://tinyurl.com/3mo27h2

Rev. Delores Berry appears in concert as LGBT-focused Our Hope Metropolitan Community Church celebrates its 12th anniversary in Athens. 7-10 p.m. at the Presbyterian Student Center, 1250 S. Lumpkin St., Athens, GA 30605, www.ourhopemcc.com

The women of **Roxie Watson** perform their amazing alterna-grass at 8 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515 N McDonough St., Decatur, GA 30030, www.eddiesattic.com

Stock up on laughs and kitchen supplies at the **Drag Queen Tupperware Party**, a benefit for For the Kid in All of Us. Features performances by the Armorettes, Tequila Mockingbird, Erica Lee, Chiffonne Anna Nicole Hilton and Crystal Hilton. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Rd., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.forthekid.org

First Metropolitan Community Church hosts its sixth annual game show night, **Match Game** with Bubba D. Licious, Michael Baker, Anne Barr, Kimora Layou and another surprise special guest. Benefits the MCC Food Bank. 7-10 p.m. at First MCC, 1379 Tullie Road, Atlanta, GA 30329, www.firstmcc.com

DJ Jay McCracken spins at the Atlanta Eagle, 306 Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.atlantaeagle.com

Sunday, Aug. 28

Martin Fry presents **Brett Long** in an after hours show from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. at Spring 4th, 714 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30308

Lotta's Big Pool Bash 2 builds on the success of June's event to raise money for Atlanta Cotillion, which benefits AID Atlanta. Features DJ Mike Pope. 1-6 p.m. at 3989 Wieuca Road, Atlanta GA 30342, www.atlantacotillion.kintera.org/timhobby

The **Feminist Outlawz** hosts a fundraiser for **Melvin Arundelli / Pee Wee Hymen**, the transgender activist and performer who was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident four years ago. Includes spaghetti dinner, silent auction and variety show. Starts at 5 p.m., show at 8 p.m. at My Sister's Room, 1271 Glenwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316, www.mysistersroom.com

Photo via Facebook

Thursday, Sept. 1

The **Black Pride Literary Salon** kick-off party features writers **Fiona Zedde**, Ifalade Ta'Shia Asanti and Alexis P. Gumbs. 7:30 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.chariscircle.org

The **Miss Utopia Pageant** brings its "legacy of love and acceptance" to Atlanta. 8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 450 Capitol Ave., Atlanta, GA 30312, www.missutopia.org

Monday, Aug. 29

Mondays are **live piano with David Reeb**. Make requests and sing along from 8 p.m. to midnight at Mixx Atlanta, 1492 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.mixxatlanta.com

Tuesday, Aug. 30

Darian Aaron signs **"When Love Takes Over,"** his coffee table book that profiles 18 African-American gay male couples in longterm relationships. 7:30 p.m. at Outwrite, 991 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.outwritebooks.com

Wednesday, Aug. 31

Tonight is the grand finale of the **Absolut Talent Karaoke competition**, when the winner takes home $3,000. 11:30 p.m. at Burkhart's, 893 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309, www.burkharts.com

Thursday, Sept. 1

Gay boys and their girls take over Atlantic Station's outdoor film series for **"Sex and the City 2."** Film starts at dusk, around 8:45-9 p.m. www.atlanticstation.com

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Friday, Sept. 2

Janis Ian performs with **Gretchen Peters, Tony Arata** and **Craig Carothers**. 8 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515 N McDonough St., Decatur, GA 30030, eddiesattic.com

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Monday, Sept. 5

The gay **Peach International Tennis Tournament** kicks off with a draw party on Thursday night at Einstein's, then continues for four days of competition at the Dekalb Tennis Center, 1400 McConnell Drive, Decatur, GA 30033, www.atta.org

publicity photo

Saturday, Sept. 3

After a five-year hiatus, legendary **DJ/Producer Peter Rauhofer** returns with CARIOCA for Labor Day Weekend. 10 p.m. at Jungle, 2115 Faulkner Rd., Atlanta, GA 30324, www.jungleclubatlanta.com, www.cariocaproductions.com

UPCOMING

In the Life Atlanta and Atlanta party promoters and nightclubs have packed schedules of community and entertainment events for the annual **Black Gay Pride** celebration over Labor Day Weekend. **For schedules and stories, see pages 19-21.**

Friday, Sept. 2

The **Black Pride Literary Remix** features Queen Sheba, T. Miller, Tyberia Blaqk, and Sherry Michelle. 7:30 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.chariscircle.org

Saturday, Sept. 3

The fifth annual **State of Black Gay America** Summit focuses on leadership, diversity and community during Black Gay Pride. 11-4 p.m. at the Melia Hotel, 590 West Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30308, www.sbgasummit.org

Erasure performs at 9 p.m. at Center Stage, 1374 W Peachtree St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.ticketmaster.com

Saturday, Sept. 3- Monday, Sept. 5

Spend three days and two nights in **Biloxi, Miss., with drag hostess Ruby Redd**, including gambling, a trip to Biloxi's gay bar, hotel accommodations and even outlet shopping. Registration deadline is Aug. 19. rubyredbiloxiandbeachtour.eventbrite.com

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THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID

Fighting for her chance

A brief life inspires us to never give up

Melissa Carter is former co-host of "The Bert Show" on Q100, where she broke ground as the first out lesbian radio personality on a major station in the city and was one of the few out morning show personalities in the country. Keep up with her at www.melissatimes.com

One of the things I admire most about my girlfriend, Katie Jo, is her community. A Georgia native, Katie has maintained friendships with folks from high school, college, graduate school, and her jobs.

Since I moved away from Tennessee, most of my hometown and college friends live hours away. Plus my growing phobia of the telephone hinders any opportunity for those hours-long conversations to catch up on every detail of each other's lives.

One group of Katie's friends is the "Book Club." I put this in quotes since I'm not convinced they actually read books or even talk about them. My take on their monthly meetings is like a shirt I saw recently — they "Read Between the WINES."

The Book Club is actually the first of Katie's community to welcome me with open arms, literally, years ago after a Q100 appearance in Midtown when they all walked over specifically to meet me after one of their gatherings.

One of the women in the club is Lynn, a graduate school friend of Katie's who was especially enthusiastic about my new status as the girlfriend when we met. I immediately liked her and her genuine love of her friends was contagious. Now I was one of them.

I never imagined I would have watched this same bundle of enthusiasm have to face a personal tragedy. A year ago, Lynn had to say goodbye to her 8-month-old daughter. At the baby's memorial, her stoic cadence as she walked down the aisle of the church reflected a mixture of sadness and peace. This month is a time of reflection for all who love Lynn, and I wanted to share her daughter's story.

Elle was a triplet, the only girl in the trio and the only one who fought for her life as soon as she was granted it. Given the nickname "Bug," this little warrior inspired us all with the typical smile and involuntary kicks of a baby. But a tube in her nose evidenced her body's struggle against Tetralogy of Fallot, a congenital heart defect.

I had the honor of spending time with Elle and was touched by the soulful stare she offered back to me. I had fought for my second chance at life with my kidney transplant nearly a decade ago. She was simply fighting for her first.

I couldn't begin to count the hours Lynn and her husband spent at the hospital with Elle, all while trying to enjoy and spend time with their two newborn sons. But every time we saw Lynn during Elle's struggle, she continued to offer us her usual welcoming light. But it was impossible not to notice her light had dimmed a little.

Elle's fight ended after doctors realized there was nothing more they could do to correct her heart. Despite her short life, Elle's story touched enough people to fill a large church to capacity. Childhood songs during the service, like "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and "Jesus Loves Me," brought many to tears.

But once the preacher began talking about Elle you could hear the babies in the crowd begin to stir. Their sudden need to move around, the echos of baby squawks here and grunts there, made me wonder if these other tiny souls were seeing more than the rest of us.

I imagined Elle there comforting her family without them knowing it, finally able to play as a healthy child, summoning the other kids to join her. Maybe those babies saw her and were just trying to accept the invitation.

No one knows how long they will live. But Elle taught me that a long life is not necessary to inspire many. You just have to fight. Fight until your last breath to simply live.

Elle's pictures remain in her home, and I realize they will serve as the only source of reference for her siblings. But just like she inspired me, I hope Elle's story will also reach into the future and touch the lives of her brothers.

DOMESTICALLY DISTURBED

Yes, you should

Obama says his views on marriage are evolving. How much longer is he planning to take?

Topher Payne is an Atlanta-based playwright, and the author of the book "Necessary Luxuries: Notes on a Semi-Fabulous Life." Find out more at topherpayne.com

Eventually the process of electing the next president will begin 20 minutes after swearing in the latest one. A quick Oath of Office, Aretha Franklin sings a little something, and we hit the campaign trail again for the next four years.

America has become the most tragic slut at the bar: Once we give in and spend a night with the trick who's been wooing us, we immediately begin looking for the next one. I truly thought 2008 was as bad as it would get: John McCain tossing aside all the ideals and beliefs that had once made him the most popular Republican among Democrats, the vitriolic attacks on Hillary Clinton, the implosion of John Edwards, and the herpes infection that was the Palin family. Barack Obama managed to jostle my waning enthusiasm, with a message of hope, change, and reconciliation.

But look at us now. I chose to help elect a president who does not support federal recognition of my marriage, but would let me fight in one of our ongoing wars, if I wanted to. I suppose that is progress, but it's still pretty twisted if you think about it for too long.

And now I'm pissed because Obama is the presumptive Democratic nominee, and I'll once again cast a vote for someone who believes I am less deserving of basic civil rights than my next door neighbor. This is particularly galling because my next door neighbor is batshit crazy.

President Obama tells me he thinks my marriage doesn't exist, although his beliefs are evolving. You know what, Mr. President? That is bonkers.

I'll tell you why it's bonkers: I think he's lying. I don't think Barack Obama has any problem with gay marriage whatsoever. He didn't back in 1996, and I sincerely doubt he was traumatized by a gay wedding in the years that followed. Unless he saw "Sex and the City 2." We were all traumatized by that gay wedding, but I think the nightmare brought us all closer together. So if Obama was just fine with the gays getting hitched back in the '90s, why would his views devolve?

Because he wanted to be elected President.

Well, I have wonderful news for Barack Obama. He doesn't have to pull that crap anymore. Look at who he's up against in the 2012 election. Does he really think staying mum on gay marriage is going to sway votes away from Michele Bachmann? That bug-eyed hideous gorgon is proof of the banality and poor fashion sense of evil.

But she's got one thing going for her that Obama doesn't: We know exactly where we stand with her. Michele Bachmann believes we are suffering from a deep affliction — a chronic case of faggotry, which can only be cured through prayer and marrying Michele Bachmann. Her beliefs aren't evolving because she doesn't think evolution exists.

Anyone who supports that shrieking harpy will not be recruited to vote Democrat just because the nominee denounces marriage equality and waves his birth certificate. So the time has come for him to let them go, and show that he too has the strength of his own convictions.

President Obama promised he would usher in a new political era. He promised there would be unprecedented change. And now, he's shuffling around the responsibility of doing his job because he's too worried about keeping it.

Obama is guaranteed the Democratic nomination. His opponent, regardless of who they are, will be conservative to the point of being Puritanical. They will represent an ideology that is part of a dying breed. It scares them, and they're going to fight hard to keep their position, which they'll achieve by pushing others down.

This is the moment for a brave leader to stare into the eyes of that kind of intolerance and announce that all Americans deserve the freedom to build a family of their choosing and that you're proud to represent all of them. I genuinely believe that's how Barack Obama feels.

If he doesn't say so, it's an affront to me, to my family, and to every gay person who helped elect him. If Barack Obama ignores what is right and just for the sake of broadening his appeal, he's worse than those who malign us.

They're just ignorant and hateful. He knows better. He's just choosing to be a coward.

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